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WHY LAVAL ?

THE interpretation of current politics is not at the best an exact science: when we try to guess what is passing behind the blockade between the enemy and his victims our guesses resemble the divination of a witch-finder. It is highly probable that the Germans imposed Laval on Marshal Pétain by a threat of force. It is quite likely, as the *Times* tells us, that they talked of unleashing their tame jackal, and giving it, at last, Nice, Corsica and Tunis. That would be, in the circumstances, the appropriate menace. Laval's conception of the future role of France in Hitler's New Order was frankly stated long ago. It is that without sulking she should wholeheartedly try to supplant Italy as Germany's willing and favoured ally. So far the process of divination may carry us, but it does not tell us what we most want to know—why the Germans should have chosen this precise moment to inflict this humiliation on a once proud nation. That Laval is an artist who enjoys the exercise of his virtuosity in the postures of subservience may be a fact. Darlan, on the other hand, has never revelled in crawling: but clumsily, stiffly and with a show of reluctance he has none the less crawled.

It is unlikely that the Nazis concern themselves overmuch with the subjective aspects of French degradation. Is there much that they can hope to get from Laval which Darlan refused? The co-operation was already fairly complete. French heavy industry has been clamped and dovetailed into the German system. By one device or another, usually at the cost of the French taxpayer, the Nazis have acquired a controlling share of all the leading French concerns. The steel plants in Lorraine and Briey have been annexed outright, but the rest, including the great Creusot armament works, are no less securely owned. The same thing holds of the chemical industry. In the event of a Nazi victory the entire equipment of all the French industries that serve the needs of war would be an integral part of the German economy and could be adapted or transferred at will to serve its ends. It follows that the stronger section of the French owning class, now a partner in the German cartels, with the banks linked to these industries, would adapt itself in mind and morals to its new situation. That part of it which was already Fascist in outlook before the war has doubtless, with the aid of a steady flow of orders, already made this mental transition. The name that Laval in Monday's broadcast gave to this new attitude of profitable submission was "lasting reconciliation." It is possible that the clue to his appointment lies here. Pétain is a man of the *ancien régime* who would go back to a pre-revolutionary France stripped of its pride and its ambitions. Darlan is a professional sailor and nothing more. Neither of them belongs to the world of industry and finance. There Laval, as lawyer and politician, is at home and his intimacy with all its intricate technique of corruption may be of service to his masters, if their purpose be, as we take it, not so much to crush and humiliate France as to use her, and above all her colonies, in their long-range schemes of military and economic domination.

This might serve as a long-distance explanation but it does not help us to guess why Laval's appointment should have seemed to the Nazis urgent and necessary precisely at this moment on the eve of their spring campaigning season. Do they need further help in Africa? But Darlan had cleared Weygand out of the way and given them the use of French ports, territorial waters and land-routes as channels for the supply of Rommel's army. He had, moreover, allowed numerous German missions to establish themselves at Casablanca and other points on the Atlantic coast which may one day possess a sinister strategic value. Nor is there any reason to suppose that Darlan would have been more reluctant to put the Japanese in possession of Madagascar than he was to give them the use of Indo-China. What more, then, can Laval do? The Russian official newsagency, *Tass*, has reported categorically that Laval will do what Darlan had hitherto refused to do—give the Germans the French fleet. It may be so, but put in this blunt way it is not easy to believe. In the first place French sailors, many of them fishermen in civil life, tend to be radicals in politics, who would not tamely obey an order to go over to the enemy. Secondly, Darlan as commander-in-chief of all the armed forces of France is still well placed to frustrate such a policy. But we cannot pretend to feel easy on this subject. Laval's inaugural broadcast, as bitterly anti-British as any Nazi diatribe, accused us of stealing the French colonies. The logical next step might be an effort to recover some of the colonies which have declared for Free France, notably Equatorial Africa. What would be still more serious would be a move to recover Syria. It is conceivable that French sailors and marines, who would not fight under German orders or side by side with the swastika, might be induced to take part in an expedition that could be described as the rescue of French territory from British imperial greed. But if once this struggle began, it could not easily be localised. Laval does nothing directly, and this may be his way of handing over the French fleet to Hitler. Whatever else he does, we may be sure that he will use every instrument of propaganda to bemuse the minds of the French people with more skill and better psychology than the dull man he has ousted. Odious as Laval may be, it is a mistake to belittle him. He has in perfection the typical Fascist art of using the weaknesses of human nature.

In spite of these risks, we count Laval's appointment a net gain, if we know how to use it. It has done something to shake the American State Department out of its ambiguous policy towards Vichy. It dreads the Left, even the mildly liberal Left, so profoundly that it has long tried to sustain Pétain as a barrier against Bolshevism. Happily it is not willing to regard Laval in that light. If we

have interpreted his permanent significance in the Nazi plan correctly, it is now clearer than ever that it is to the honest workers of France, be they sailors, artisans, peasants or intellectuals, that we have to appeal, against a corrupt upper strata which will serve the Nazi war-machine for profit. The propaganda which will pave the way to victory must boldly face the fact that any patriotic rising will be directed no less against this traitor class than against the German invader. Official circles under-estimate this explosive force. We now know about the men of Saint-Nazaire who lost their lives in aiding what they perhaps hoped was more than a mere commando raid. The hopeful moral is clear. As soon as we are strong enough to land with a force that could hold so much as an isolated tongue of land, we may count on the active and combatant help of the French masses, who have all had their military training. What we need for assault is not, if we strike while the Germans are involved in their desperate Russian adventure, an indefinitely numerous army. Rather is it a dashing and well-found body of shock-troops, behind which the manhood of the occupied territory could muster. That, if we have the daring to attempt it, is the appropriate answer to the appointment of Laval.

A Combined General Staff

A new spirit, which is disinclined to accept bad news as inevitable and which hopes for more vigorous initiative from the Allied side, is now apparent in Britain: it is reflected this week in the House of Commons. The raid on a vital Augsburg factory, in which bombers hedge-hopped across Germany with astonishing courage, was a daring, but tragically costly, feat. But the event which has mainly affected public opinion is the visit of General Marshall. It is universally believed that the conversations between the Prime Minister, General Marshall and Mr. Harry Hopkins have brought one stage nearer the active policy for which the country hopes.

The Parliamentary Correspondent of the *Times*, days before the Secret Session of the House, went so far as to prophesy that the debate would turn on the question of a combined General Staff. This is not surprising, for it is on this proposal that disquiet about the conduct of the war has now centred; and in the *Times* itself impressive space and weighty editorial support are being given to correspondents, led by Sir Edward Grigg, advocating the establishment of a Combined General Staff, under a Service or (non-political) civilian chairman, to direct and co-ordinate the planning of naval, military and air strategy. A long line of peers jostle to toss their coronets into the ring in support of the proposal. It is not suggested, nor would it be logical to suggest, that a completely new "Three Service" combined Staff should be erected to work "in parallel" with the three existing Service Staffs. For purposes of joint planning the machinery exists and, up to a point, works well. The White Paper reveals an organisation which is formally correct enough. Nor is it proposed that the War Cabinet and the Cabinet's Defence Committee should be divested in any degree of their supreme authority as final arbiters on grand strategy. Decisions on major operations of war must clearly be based on judgment of political as well as strictly military factors; and the contention that a Prime Minister in war must be chairman of the Cabinet's Defence Committee is unassailable. The proposal that the three Chiefs of Staff should sit as a combined General Staff under a chairman who is neither the Prime Minister nor a member of the War Cabinet is made with a view to ensuring that the collective view of the Government's three chief Service advisers reaches the War Cabinet, through its Defence Committee, in a form uninfluenced by political considerations or by the personal influence of the Prime Minister himself. So long as the present system exists whereby the Prime Minister either sits himself as chairman of an important Chiefs of Staffs meeting or is represented at it by a military *Eminence grise* briefed with the Prime Minister's views, can there be no assurance that really independent, untutored service views and recommendations reach the War Cabinet? In these circumstances how is responsibility for the errors of omission and commission that have led to the unbroken series of disasters from Crete to Burma to be apportioned? Perhaps the most concrete and useful approach to the whole problem would be to demand a proper inquiry into the disasters that attended the defence and last minute reinforcement of Singapore.

Home Front (*By an Industrial Correspondent*)

One after another, the Governments of the United Nations are setting up Departments and Committees to study, *in partibus infidelium*, the problems of reconstruction. In fact, these committees are concerned with questions of immediate post-war relief; for it is plain that throughout occupied Europe there is likely to be a problem of sheer famine on the morrow of the war. But if relief is to be so organised as to lead on as quickly as possible to a rebuilding of productive capacity in the famine-stricken areas, it is of the greatest importance that the related problems of relief and reconstruction shall be treated together. Rumour has it that they are not being so treated in the discussions which are proceeding between the representatives of the exiled European Governments and our own agencies which are considering questions of post-war relief. It is said that these discussions are being kept pretty strictly to relief pure and simple, though relief ought obviously to merge into the rebuilding of the production capacity of the countries concerned, and failure to build a bridge between the two groups of problems may easily lead to a situation in which the need for emergency relief may be indefinitely prolonged.

* * *

Unless the problems of post-war reconstruction are taken seriously during the war, we are well on the way to losing the peace. Nor is it enough that plans should be made by each Government separately, or even by Governments communing together behind closed doors. An indispensable factor in getting ready for a decent and durable settlement in Europe is the education of public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic; and this education cannot be brought about by outpourings of generalities, but only by the public announcement and discussion of concrete plans for dealing with specific difficulties. It is a misfortune that the "hush-hush" policy which has been applied to so many wartime questions about which publicity could not possibly help the enemy and would help morale in this country has been extended to post-war problems as well. No doubt, one thing lying at the back of this reticence is unwillingness in the Foreign Office and in other Departments to face the implications of collaboration with the U.S.S.R.; and another is the fear of saying things which will offend Mr. Cordell Hull's placid belief in the virtues of a "free trade" system so interpreted as to allow the Americans to keep their tariff as high as they please. But "hush-hush" about the real problems which underlie the generalisation of the Atlantic Charter does much more harm than good, even in the United States; for it is explained across the Atlantic as due to the sinister doings of "British imperialists," whereas in truth the main explanation of it is sheer fright and unwillingness to face displeasing facts. More, and more open, discussion would, in fact, do a great deal of good; it would reassure, and at the same time educate, public opinion in America, and it would compel our politicians to face up to the question of the Soviet Union's part in the coming settlement.

* * *

The Budget White Paper is enlightening about the present degree of economic mobilisation and of the degree of "inflation" which is involved in present methods of war finance. Tax revenue for 1942–3 is estimated at £2,361 million, and other receipts, including the Canadian contribution of £225 million, bring the revenue up to £2,627 million. Estimated expenditure stands at £5,286 million, leaving a gap of nearly £2,660 million to be filled. This gap has to be filled by the alienation of overseas assets, by home "disinvestment"—i.e., using up of stocks and failure to reproduce capital assets—by domestic saving and foreign borrowing, and to the extent to which it is not covered by these methods, by some form of inflation. This last element, which constitutes the real "gap," cannot of course be accurately measured in advance; but it seems certain to be considerable unless big further cuts can be made in the actual volume of consumption. The *Economist* estimates that in 1941 personal consumption was between 15 and 20 per cent. lower in terms of goods and services than in 1938. How much further can this total be cut? I doubt whether the higher taxes on drink, tobacco and non-essential goods will by themselves have a great deal of effect. Consumption will be cut down successfully only by a decisive limitation on supplies. It is a natural consequence of full employment and heavy overtime, coupled with high taxation on the larger incomes, that spending power has shifted substantially in favour of the wage-earners remaining in industry, as against both the men and women serving in the armed forces and the wealthier section of the community—except to the extent to which the latter are living by consuming their capital. This must lead to a heavy demand for cheap "luxury" goods. If this demand is to be curbed, the only possible method is direct limitation of supplies. What really matters is not so much the Budget as the balance sheet of the nation in terms of real resources. If, in these terms, it is asked what proportion of the real national income is now being spent on the war, the answer is not easy; for there are many alternative definitions of national income. If we compare total government expenditure for all purposes which use up actual resources with total personal consumption of resources—the fairest comparison on the whole—the answer seems to be that the Government and the local authorities are now spending rather over half the real national income, and the public consuming rather less than half. This compares favourably with Mr. Roosevelt's recent expression of opinion that a 50–50 division would represent a satisfactory degree of economic mobilisation for the U.S.A.

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

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NEW WORLDS FOR OLD

Among all the deficiencies of the United Nations none is so serious as the lack of a constructive purpose. From that deficiency follow mistakes in strategy and lack of co-operation at vital moments. The greatest of the Axis advantages is that those who fight for Germany and Japan have no doubts about their programme of action; their purpose may be mainly or wholly bad, but at least those who work and fight for them are not thwarted by lack of belief in their future. The Germans and the Japanese both fight to dominate, and to construct in Europe and the Far East a world shaped to their own desires. The Allies fight different wars, and it is only now, after much bitter experience, that our rulers learn with surprise that subject nations will not die that the British Empire should live. Why should they? We still fight a stubborn war in defence of our past; the Chinese have thrown away their past, and within their country they are building their future; the Russian people fight without reservation and with all they have, for they are defending the country which they themselves have built in the last twenty years. What constructive purpose is there which is common to us all and which will give meaning to the constant appeals to throw aside our comforts and risk everything for the common cause? Beyond the necessity of survival and the vague aspirations of a better world, nobody tells us what is the common cause.

Yet the people continuously discuss peace aims; and for sound reasons. The need to offer an alternative to the German and Japanese New Orders is based upon realisation of the collapse of the old world. Desire to plan ahead is not only an import from Russia; it springs from an urgent sense that chaos may overwhelm post-war humanity. Longing for constructive idealism is like the oxygen-hunger of the overdriven heart; people subjected to prolonged strain need extra stimulus. More, they need a dynamic for victory; without it, the conquered nations will not resist their masters; without it, we shall not win this war.

We all recognise the difficulties attendant upon the formulation of peace-plans. Cabinet ministers, who have the power to do it, are chosen for their ability to wage war, rather than to frame long-term policy. They are immersed in work. With few exceptions they are elderly men who live sentimentally in the past, realize the present with some difficulty, and cannot imagine a greatly changed future. Most of them take refuge behind the excuse that the future is unknowable, and therefore that it is folly to legislate for it; by which they mean in truth that they lack the statesmanship and resolution to mould events to serve purposes which transcend either party or national interest. The frequent excuse that we should "concentrate entirely upon winning the war" is simply cant.

Again they say, as Mr. Churchill did recently to the Conservative Association, that they have set up organs for planning and that much work is being done. So it is. There is a group concerned with war aims in general; there is the colonial committee under Lord Hailey; there is an economic committee under Sir Frederick Leith-Ross. These bodies may be doing excellent work. But they must consider the views of the Allied governments, some of which, especially the refugee governments, are likely to be over-attached to the past. Official committees also are tempted to frame plans to suit their own national policies rather than the general weal: it is an odd thing, but diplomats who spend their time in contact with foreign races are usually very bad practitioners of international justice. At all events those committees give no satisfaction to the ordinary people, indeed by absorbing the services of some of the best thinkers in the country they deprive us of normal sources of information and leadership, for their deliberations are strictly secret. There is a grave danger that when the time comes for peace plans to be announced, the people, left too long in ignorance, will have become indifferent and unwilling to make the prolonged effort of sacrifice necessary to carry out any real planning. The 1922 Club, and its likes, would be only too glad to seize upon such bewilderment in order to sabotage progress, on the ground that public opinion did not support it.

We, the people, have been too long left with the amiable generalisations of the Atlantic Charter and one or two statements by Mr. Eden that the pre-war world will not return. The Government has looked at a nation weary with endurance and grief, suffering the numbness due to war-shock, or the dangerous active frustration due to lack of motive power, and offered no lead. That is why Mr. Bevin's speech to the I.L.O. on Monday reads like a tonic. In any case, lack of official leadership in Britain is luckily neither fatal nor final. For every forward movement in our history the initiative has always come from outside the government. It shows every sign of doing so again. The people are asking: "Why are we fighting this war?" The answer is being given in the writings of individuals, in conversations between friends, in camps and factories and canteens; mouth to mouth by ordinary folk, led by one or two newspapers, notably the *Times*, and a scatter of societies. The most accurate definition of such people is that they are realists: they are aware of the tendencies and problems of human life, and seek means to control the one and to solve the other. In name they are progressives; strays nesting uncomfortably on the barren branches of the Conservative tree; Liberal and Labour party members; the natural Left, young men and women in the services and workshops.

The realists observe a world economically so inter-related that industry draws its raw materials from the entire earth, and that the primary production even of African and South Sea Island tribes is revolutionised to feed that industry. It would be possible with the knowledge we now possess to produce enough food and all other needs to lift every living human being to a level of decent comfort in a decade; of modest luxury in a generation. The experience of the Soviet Union, and of Britain in wartime prove that goods can be equitably rationed in scarcity. It is a matter of deciding what things shall be produced and manipulating the currency so that they are made available. The same technique can be used for plenty. It means jettisoning the capitalist system, whose economic working has become manifestly inadequate. The obstacles to this consummation are, internationally, the Axis Powers, which have linked technological advance to their militarist nationalism, and propose to use it to keep themselves powerful and armed—and incidentally rich—and to refuse prosperity to their subjects and satellites, because it would mean possible resistance. Nationally, in Britain, the obstacle is the vested interest of the privileged class, whose riches increased far more rapidly under the old system than did those of the workers. Very few of them (and these of the middling professional sort rather than the wealthy industrialists) will welcome the end of private profit. We have a lamb-like goodness, as a people. We may have to buy the money-barons out. If not they will have to be blown out, as they are aware; and they are busily constructing bombproof shelters for themselves in the wartime "controls" which are certain to be prolonged after fighting stops and should turn into the first series of peacetime state-planned industries. It is a bad snag that the United States, whose modern and flexible industry would make it especially suited to production for need, is the stronghold of predacious capitalism; there is no room in a decent society for a Dupont de Nemours with 540 millions made out of explosives. On the other hand, the Tenessee Valley scheme is a fine experiment in democratic planning. But as far as Britain goes we must plan for the block Europe-Asia-Africa: and we ought to proclaim our faith now, and never stop proclaiming it till the world accepts it as true. That faith is this. "The world is one, and it is rich; rich enough for every child born to be sure of enough food to live, the right food to be strong, a good house, cleanliness, clothes to wear. Every child shall have these, and more. But it means sharing and planning the wealth we make. It means that after the war the victors must still be rationed, so that the starving peoples are fed first; that the rich nations will forgo luxuries for years to come: that no single man will be very rich. We have promised already to feed the starving: we have laid up stocks to do it. But this will be no temporary plan of salvage, necessary though that is. We mean to enlist all nations in a common scheme, to make the financial experts devise a money system which will enable all peoples to use the world's wealth. From this plan no nation, not even our enemies, will be excluded; and it will be based upon the equality of rights of all people."

The machinery for this revolution is simple in principle, if complicated in detail. In any case, there is nothing to daunt us about devices to get things done. The minds which control the majestic barrages of the flow of credit are perfectly capable of managing currency to facilitate distribution for use, instead of production for profit; they would find it a small thing to alter the opening and closing of their sluices, if they were given their orders. Maynard Keynes was right when he told us not to be frightened by the humbug of finance. On the continental scale, all the planners are agreed that there must be a European economic authority; designed to engage immediately in distributing food and necessary supplies—probably medical aid also—to the war areas. Representatives of all the countries of Europe will have to serve on it and decide priorities in terms of urgent need, not of politics. A similar organisation will be needed in Asia, for China, Malaya and Java, at the least. These bodies ought to be continued and strengthened to take on long-term planning; the organising of demobilisation and re-employment, the turnover from war to peace industry, industrialisation of backward regions like the Balkans, public works, especially in transport and power, above all improved markets and prices for agriculture and raising of housing to agreed hygienic and nutritional standards. On a world scale, there has long been international organisation of the production and marketing of main products such as steel, aluminium, nickel, rubber, tin, sugar and tea. But these have nearly all been restrictive trusts, whose principle was to sweat the primary producer, especially if he belonged to the colonial or tropical peoples, and to sell dear to the consumer. Tea, with a large measure of Government control, is the best-managed cartel. In future these materials should be controlled by public disinterested bodies, so that the working producer and the producing country gain the main profit, and the market is enlarged by cheap and large sale. The directors of the companies who control and speculate in shares in world commerce should lose their control, and except as salaried managers, be pensioned off.

That planned economy may sound too good to be true. It is, however, the statement in plain language of the alternative to the planned economy of the Nazis. It is no harder to design technically than the New Order: it will be far easier to execute since it would be welcomed instead of detested. And to fancy that we can return to the day of the self-contained state in economy, or to that of the individual owner or small company in the great staples of trade is simply moonshine. Either the money-barons will control economy with that complete internationalism which is prepared to squeeze all mankind, so long as they grow fat; or the militarists will control economy, intent only to strengthen their arms, and keep their slaves weak and poor; or the peoples will control economy for the benefit of humanity. The great industries have done it; the Nazis are doing it; and we can do it, if we want to, and want it enough.

THE UNDERGROUND CONTINENTAL PRESS

After two years of Nazi terror, spiritual resistance all over the invaded Continent has not been crushed, but intensified. This is proved once more by recent copies of the clandestine press which have reached this country. They are of high standard and obviously produced by expert journalists and editors. Distribution is very often in the hands of juveniles who manage to evade the Gestapo. But they are also despatched by post and copies are being pushed into letter boxes by anonymous helpers who have grown into a small, but efficient, unarmed army all over the Continent.

In France, clandestine newspapers appear regularly. One of them, *Pantagruel*, bears the proud slogan: "Not for sale and not to be bought." Its tone is strongly pro-British. It publishes brilliant articles about the effects of invasion and provides valuable statistical material.

Caustic headlines appear in it: "Hitler's spring-offensive of 1941 has led the German army to —Belgrade! But Belgrade is a European capital and *not* the capital of Great Britain! Another delay of the New Order Plan! It's better to have the Germans in Athens and Belgrade than in London!" Again, it comments on an advertisement in a Berlin paper praising a new cheap shelter bed: "We did not know that the Berliners have to sleep in their cellars!" Every copy bears the appeal: "Arise, France! Long live Freedom, long live Free France!" *Pantagruel* is printed, whereas another paper, *Valmy*, is stencilled. *Valmy's* slogan is: "We have one enemy—the invader!" In a recent copy a few verses advise how to treat the enemy. They show the hatred of the invader and all French Quislings: "You must listen every day eagerly to the B.B.C. You must ignore Radio-Paris because it is Boche. You must fight with de Gaulle on the great day of disembarkation. You must despise all Vichy men and their humiliating decrees. You shall punish Laval, Déat and their like, and dance the Carmagnole when their heads are being chopped off." In another copy *Valmy* reassures its readers that "the entire forces of the Anglo-Saxon world and many other reserve forces have rallied in a joint effort hundreds of millions of human beings, firmly resolved to crush tyranny and to restore a new world to the subjugated and the hopeless."

From January, 1941, *La Voix de Paris*, paper of the Communist party of Paris, has urged close collaboration with Russia: "The people of one-sixth of this globe have won victory since 1917. It has won victory in the Soviet Union, where the genuine democracy has been established and where there is no unemployment, no misery and where the abuse of mankind has been banned for ever." *Humanité*, which was founded by Jean Jaurés, and was banned the day of invasion, makes its almost regular stencilled appearance and publishes aggressive cartoons of Hitler and his satellites. A Communist leaflet calls itself "People of France." It is printed and pleads for a popular government. It denounces the traitors of France and pledges itself to abolish the "gangster politics of Laval, Doriot, de la Rocque, etc." It is signed Maurice Thorez and Jacques Duclos for the Central Committee of French Communists. All these papers and leaflets prove once more to those who love France, the spiritual world centre, that its immortal spirit is still as alive and as aggressive as it has always been, in spite of the Gestapo—and that its sense of humour has not been crushed.

In Belgium, *La Libre Belgique*, of 1914–1918 fame, has made its reappearance. Whereas it used to be the nightmare of the invaders of the first world-war, it has now become the nightmare of the Nazis. *La Libre Belgique* gives its address sarcastically thus: "Rédaction et Administration Oberfeldkommandantur, I. Place du Trone, Bruxelles." The editor calls himself Peter Pan, Jardin d'Egmont, Bruxelles. In various copies, the Nazi censors' stamp is reproduced, "Geprueft, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht." Important events from the outside world are commented upon and photos showing the destruction of British bombs on Germany are published. The words of Munich's Bishop, Cardinal Faulhaber, and the famous letters of Bishops von Galen and Wurm are reprinted and the treacherous acts committed by Belgian Quislings are denounced. In a recent copy a photo shows the graves of British soldiers: "These Tommies are not forgotten, their graves are decorated with flowers and on July 21 an immense tricolour V on the Terlaenen cemetery showed that these heroes have not died in vain."

Another clandestine Belgian paper is *Le Belge*, the monthly of the Patriotic Organisation, with its slogan: "Ad Augusta per Angusta." In one of its leaders, the editor declares that "although up till now events have not been favourable to Britain, the final issue, victory of the Allies, is certain. History is a school for immorality. That is why the liberation of all once free peoples will not be brought about by a triumph of moral, but by the overwhelming resources of the Anglo-Saxon world and its Allies."

In the Netherlands, three papers are being more or less regularly published. One of them is *De Geus* (The Beggar), famous from the eight years' war. It is produced by students of Leiden University. The others are *Vrij Nederland* and *Uit de Woestijn* (Out of the Desert). They are partly printed, partly stencilled, now and then written by hand. They contain news from London broadcasts, advice concerning sabotage and new ways of resistance. The pastoral letters of the German Bishops were widely circulated, as well as any items from the anti-Nazi front in other invaded countries.

In Czechoslovakia, Josef Skalda printed and distributed three illegal newspapers. The Nazis got hold of him, brought him to Germany where he was tried before the so-called "peoples' court" (the entire court is staffed by party-members), sentenced to death and executed. But in spite of what was meant to be a warning to other active Nazi fighters, several illegal newspapers continue to appear. They have an extremely large circulation. The most popular is *V Boj* (On with the Struggle), *R.C.S.* and *I.S.N.* (*Information Service for National Liberation*). They are mostly stencilled and copies are circulated by a variety of ingenious methods which unfortunately cannot be described.

The Norwegian illegal papers are *Vi Vil Oss Land* (We Want Our Country), *Kongs Posten* (The Royal Post), *V-Posten*, *Tidens Tegn* (The Sign of Times) and *Fri Fagbevaegelse* (Free Trade Union Movement). *Tidens Tegn* is the continuation in duplicated form of one of the oldest Oslo papers, which closed down, voluntarily because its staff was not willing to submit to the Nazis. All these papers are duplicated only because of the risk of discovery. Hundreds of people assist in the work of production and distribution, and the tracks are so well covered that up till now the Gestapo has only succeeded now and then in arresting one or the other individual. The Norwegian press has played an important part in the failure of the Nazi recruiting campaign of "volunteers" for Russia, which had to be cancelled after three weeks. This clandestine press has also given its support to the Norwegian Bishops' fight against the invader which led to the resignation of Bishop Berggrav, who opposed the teaching of Nazi doctrine.

There is no actual clandestine press in Denmark, except the wide circulation of leaflets and handwritten messages which circulate news from London and advise local resistance whenever Nazi meetings are to be staged. This has led to violent fights of patriots, and Clausenists (the Danish Nazis) and the Nazi-paper *Faedrelandet* has recently published a complaint that the Clausen party members "are treated like enemies by their own countrymen." Writers and editors of booklets voicing the genuine Danish nation's attitude towards Nazi domination, are being imprisoned and heavily fined. Some have been sent to German concentration camps. The famous Danish historian, Dr. La Cour, has been arrested for the third time, because he published another booklet denouncing the Nazis and adhering to Denmark's historical past. A demand from the Nazis for the transfer of Dr. La Cour to Germany and a trial by the peoples' court (which might have meant a death sentence) was so energetically refused that the Nazis dared not insist.

Summing up, it can be said that the clandestine Continental press is doing a grand job, in spite of tremendous odds, in the face of constant threat to freedom and life of all concerned with this work. To realise what this clandestine press campaign means, it must be pointed out under what circumstances these people work: they must be ready to dismantle and move, at a moment's notice, machines and staff and find another temporarily safe spot. They must be on the look-out for persecutors, they must dodge the narrow iron netting of barbed wire, spies, agents, provocateurs which the Gestapo has thrown over their country; they must assure themselves of the loyalty of all concerned, which means that nobody must fall to the temptation of extremely high sums which the persecutors promise to anybody who betrays these collaborators.

The clandestine press keeps up the spirit of the subjugated, which are cut off from the outside world. They stir their belief in and their hope for what the French paper *Valmy* promises in its recent leader "Certainty: You know that Democracy is not dead. It has been soiled and betrayed. But from now on it cannot be attacked without risk, because its arms are forged in the most powerful arsenals of the world."

ELISABETH CASTONIER

THE TIME FACTOR

The Minister of Aircraft Production has this week pointed out to factory workers that by stopping work a few minutes early they seriously interfere, on aggregate, with war production output. This point is one which up to now has hardly ever been made. We have heard endlessly about absenteeism, and about special groups accused of deliberate slacking; there has been much publicity emphasis on the points of friction and delay in production, but remarkably little approach to the problems of the average rather than the exceptional. This largely derives from the main personnel theory of this war so far, namely, that the first consideration is to move more and more *bodies* into the Services and the war factories, to have everybody "mobilised" somehow. There has been an enormous pushing of people into new positions, on the assumption that more bodies meant more strength. The quantitative basis of our war effort has obscured the importance of the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is based on the assumption that a lot of bodies are not necessarily helpful, unless they are so distributed and so minded as to give the optimum effect per body. Whether it is making tanks or using them, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in this war we have under-estimated the importance of qualitative considerations, with some unsatisfactory effects. If you rely on counting heads, irrespective of what's in them, in the end you have also to reckon with headaches.

How does this work out in practice, in production? Mass-Observation has been studying war production intensively since last October, at all levels, from 80 managing directors down to many hundreds of workers engaged in their factories; our report on the results has just been published.* I can therefore speak with some confidence when I say that one of the principal delaying factors in war production is the continuing under-estimate of qualitative human factors, the consistently crude approach to the human industrial problems which are now so much accentuated in every direction.

* "People in Production," Part I of an enquiry into British War Production, published as *Change* No. 3 by the Advertising Service Guild, 10 Hertford Street, W.1.

The aspect of *human* inefficiency about which we hear most at the present time is absenteeism. The extent of absenteeism has been much exaggerated, but it nevertheless constitutes a serious problem. It is considerably higher now than pre-war, usually twice as high among women as among men, higher among unskilled workers, and highest among juveniles. In some factories on some days, mainly Saturday or Sunday, nearly a quarter of the total labour force may be absent. In other factories, however (sometimes those immediately next to the high absentee ones), absenteeism may be at the peacetime rates usually around 3 per cent. to 7 per cent. The two primary factors which seem to influence this are, first, the general labour relations and industrial morale within the firm (mainly affected by the outlook of those at the head), and secondly the hours of work associated with the conditions of work (welfare, rest pauses, lighting, feeding facilities, whether or not the factory is one of the minority with radio, and so on). According to our estimate, about a half of present absenteeism can be roughly classed as "unavoidable," and approximately a third definitely "selfish." There is, of course, a wide discrepancy between what people say to managements and what they do, illustrated in many ways, but perhaps best by the following from a Midland factory:

Late-comers on two successive days were given a form to fill in to explain why they were late. The result was that transport came out easily first:

Reasons for lateness.	Percentage giving this reason.
Transport	40
Overslept	31
Civil Defence Duty overnight ..	4
Indisposed	7
Domestic Reasons	8
Miscellaneous	10

When 16 specimens of these transport alibis were followed up with the bus inspector, it was found that 10 of them would not hold water. The evidence of the others showed that the main cause for being late was that the workers hated getting to work too soon, and waited for a bus that would get them to work *just in time*, so that any slight mishap, such as a broken shoelace, would make them late, whereupon they blamed the transport services.

The long conditioning of peacetime patterns, which remain more prevalent in industry than in any other part of the war effort, operate in a hundred ways, of which this time-snatching is only one. In a number of factories studied, we found that time lost was sometimes almost as important as unauthorised absenteeism. For instance, skilled men in a big war factory were losing 0.3 per cent. of total working hours each day through lateness alone. The time psychology of the industrial worker is only "obvious" when he or she doesn't turn up for work at all, though it is also noticed officially by many managements if he or she arrives late. There is an unmeasured quantity of lost time inside the factory from the same cause. The following from the report of an investigator who has been working as an unskilled girl in a key war factory gives a fair picture of the process:

The official time for dinner is one o'clock, and the official time for getting ready for it is five minutes to; actually, preparations start a long while before that. Between half-past twelve and five to one the cloakrooms are locked (the idea of this is to prevent people getting ready before the appointed time) but what happens as a result of this is that at 12.20 a crowd of girls is to be found in the cloakroom washing their hands, preparatory to going back to the bench and doing nothing whatever for half an hour, so as not to get their hands dirty again before dinner. Another dodge for getting ready before time is the bucket of water in the welding room. It is filled from the water hose there, and the girls who work in that part of the room, and their friends, always wash their hands there before time.

The loss of even *one* minute of any of the breaks is regarded as a tragedy. The anxiety not to miss a single second is always marked at dinner time. At a minute or so before one, people stand by the door poised like athletes for a race, waiting to rush at the first note of the buzzer. A certain amount of this anxiety is because being late means being at the end of the queue in the canteen; but it is certainly not all due to this, because people who bring their own sandwiches, and are therefore not concerned with the queue, are equally anxious to be in the front of the rush. On one occasion there was some kind of mistake, and the cloakrooms did not get unlocked until a minute or so after one; the anger and dismay caused would have seemed to the outsider quite fantastic. At five to one, as usual, all the girls who had not managed to wangle washing their hands earlier gathered round the door of the cloakroom, and started as usual to yell for "Pop"—the little white-headed man responsible for locking and unlocking the doors. For the first minute or two his non-appearance was treated rather as a joke, and there was a lot of laughter among the shouting:

"Come on, Pop. You mustn't keep a lady waiting!"
"Come on, Pop!"
"What's he doing?"
"He's gone to bed. Shall we come and wake you up, Pop?"
"He's scared. He's scared we'll bugger him. Come on, Pop, we won't hurt you."
"Pop! Hurry, Pop, we're waiting."

But as the five minutes passed and one o'clock drew near the joking ceased, and genuine anger took its place; when the buzzer actually sounded and he still hadn't appeared there were such shrieks of despair and fury as I have rarely heard. When, some two minutes later, Pop appeared, the situation was such that he remained at a distance, threw the key into the crowd, and fled.

However many bodies you move into war production, and however much of the national income you are spending on it, you are not thereby automatically obtaining optimum effort, though one would not suspect this by the public remarks of Ministers. The most fruitful source of salvage to-day is not rubber or paper or scrap, but the salvage of minutes and moments at the bench and at breakfast. Absenteeism and late-coming are only conspicuous manifestations of a more widely distributed condition, the extreme manifestation of which is the strike (there were more strikes in 1941 than for many years past, mostly short and illegal, using more than a million man-days). I am not suggesting that people are slacking in the factories. Most workers are pulling their weight, and many are doing much more than that. But pulling is a process which can be done either indiscriminately or skilfully, under guidance. And if you pull more than your weight, in the end you may be reduced to a state where you are not fit to pull at all. In my view, the too crude leadership of the people in production, and the way in which scientifically proved facts of human work are still ignored, adequately explain many of these worker deficiencies.

TOM HARRISSON

(To be continued)

BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

LIFE in this war is more bureaucratically governed than ever before. The regular Civil Service is thinly spread over a vast area of enlarged and new departments. This is done, as a rule, by using civil servants in the senior posts, and staffing them with amateur and *ad hoc* assistants. The new departments were planned in peacetime, and the Civil Service skeleton is deliberately designed to ensure order and efficiency in the conduct of business. Order in the sense of the keeping of files and procession of minutes from one official to another is achieved. Efficiency is much more dubious. Great factories and humble individuals alike wail that they are put off by officials, that their letters are unanswered, their claims unheard, their work delayed. Why? First, there is the Civil Service pace. In normal times it is a cult to do things slowly. The older men cannot break this habit and adapt to wartime speed; and their energetic juniors, constantly snubbed, grow embittered and cease from trying to do it. Secondly, the age of the men in responsible posts is too high; in dozens of cases a mediocre man, who has oozed up through the hierarchy by avoiding any dangerous originality, occupies a key position.

This is the defect of planning. The last war caught us entirely unprepared, and was met by improvisation. That threw up a brilliant series of officials young enough to adapt to novel conditions and devise novel methods. Recourse to *Who's Who* reveals the following list. Arthur Salter at 37 was running Allied Maritime Transport, at 38 was a member of the Supreme Economic Council; with Roger Keyes he was responsible for the convoy system and for British survival of the submarine blockade. William Beveridge was senior in the Food Ministry at 39. Walter Layton represented Munitions in Russia and the U.S.A. at 33. John Anderson was secretary to the Ministry of Shipping at 35. Maurice Hankey was secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence at 25 and to the Cabinet at 32. Maynard Keynes represented the Treasury at the Peace Conference at 35. Josiah Stamp was assistant secretary to the Board of Inland Revenue at 36, and Warren Fisher head of the Civil Service at 40. The characteristic of the mediocre man in office is that he fears the force of youth and the ability of age alike. How long did it take the Government to use Sir William Beveridge? We all know first-class men who have carried and can carry great official responsibility who have tried in vain to be employed in the most junior positions in Government departments.

Governments of the pre-war period were characterised by a timidity and shortsightedness that is almost incredible in retrospect. They naturally appointed as their permanent advisers men of a cast of mind congenial to themselves. The heads of the Treasury were typical. Sir Warren Fisher is in many ways an attractive figure. But he must be the most old-fashioned type of Whig. At the beginning of the war his dislike of tyranny led him oddly enough to make a speech in the North suggesting that economic liberty was incompatible with the Controls, which he wanted to see abolished. His record as head of the Treasury, which holds the final voice in the appointments to the high Civil Service posts, shows the same attitude. The brilliant service built up during the great reforming period from 1906–1919 was emasculated. Some left; some were cowed. Here and there a commanding figure like Sir Malcolm Delevingne survived as monarch of an activity, in his case drug control, which nobody was concerned to hamper; and he instituted a world control of a dangerous trade. Sir Horace Wilson continued the tradition of bureaucratic inactivity. Reform became as unhealthy for a civil servant as mechanisation for army officers. The result was a number of heads of departments who can always find good reasons for doing nothing: and a service which can subject any new proposal to a withering fire of criticism, but not one that can willingly entertain new ideas, much less originate them and carry them through. I am reminded of the minute sent round the departments by Mr. Churchill, directing officials to write their minutes shortly and in plain English. A young amateur official told me that he passed this to his regular civil service chief with cheers. The senior snorted, took it by the corner, and dropped it in the wastepaper basket.

If the Civil Service is not to hamper the organisation of victory and of reconstruction it must be inspired by a different spirit and be led by different men. While decisions in high policy are taken by Ministers, the day-to-day work is dictated by the permanent heads. They remain when Ministers go.

It is rumoured that the present head of the Civil Service will shortly be retiring on reaching the age of 60. The appointment of his successor

is a matter of far-reaching importance. He will have not only to organise for victory, but to influence the critical post-war years when the future structure of this country will be determined.

It may be suggested that the two posts of the Head of the Civil Service and the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, now combined, should be separated and held by different men. They are far too heavy a task for a single pair of shoulders. A wise Director to-day will build up for himself a group of young Civil Servants who work directly with him. He would modify the system by which Permanent Secretaries answer and stultify any criticism brought against their own Departments without any independent check. But whether other changes are made or not, it is clear that the first requirement of the new Head of the Civil Service is that he should be a man in the prime of life with originality and vigour unimpaired. He must be strong enough to break through the barriers of departmental procedure. He must have the qualities of leadership to release pent-up energies now wasted; above all, he must realise that in the civil administration the constructive mind must have preference over the barrenly critical. He must see that authority is properly devoted to junior officers. Civil Servants need leadership as well as the fighting services.

A LONDON DIARY

THE political truce, interpreted as the passive acceptance of behind-the-scenes arrangements in the offices of the Party Whips and professional Organisers, has broken down. The Independent victory at Grantham was a portent. At Rugby, things have now gone a stage further. Labour supporters there are politely described as "seeking guidance" from headquarters, but the plain fact is that many of them are in reality serving notice on the Labour Party chiefs that they propose to support W. J. Brown against Sir Claude Holbrook, who is exactly the sort of Conservative bigwig whose election Labour supporters find it intolerable to allow to go by default. So many Labour people feel like this now that the Labour Party Executive cannot, I presume, any longer pretend that it thinks it ought to disaffiliate them. At Wallasey, on the other hand, the local Labour party is very naturally supporting the National Conservative, John Pennington, against the Independent candidate, the Hon. Leonard Cripps. I say "naturally," because the brother of Sir Stafford Cripps is a Tory business man whom it would be preposterous to dress up as a voice from the people raised against the shortcomings of the "Old Gang."

* * *

Amid all the confusion of the by-elections, a few simple points stand out quite clearly. The first is that there is real support among the people now for anyone who, rightly or wrongly, can convince them that he is in favour of a more "go-ahead" policy—in terms of strategy and of the organisation of the national resources—than the Government seems to favour. Anyone who looks Left and is christened "independent"—that is having no connection with the present Government or parties—has a chance of election. That is the basic difference between the present moment and six months ago, when a majority still believed that Mr. Churchill could be trusted to do all the going ahead that could be desired. The second point is that for the first time there are fairly clear indications of an attempt by several different groups ranging from extreme Right to near Left to organise the running of Independents favoured by them. The third is that the Labour Party in these circumstances will be faced with decisions which call for the utmost imagination, suppleness and political skill.

As one Independent candidate supporting another, I hear that the Hon. Leonard Cripps, attended Captain Bernard Acworth's inaugural meeting at Putney, and spoke of Acworth's foresight and called him "a recognised naval strategist." A friend sends me some examples of Acworth's foresight.

In his *The Navies of To-day and To-morrow* (p. 160) he argued that Hong Kong was the base to defend and not Singapore, because of "the complete immunity from attack on Singapore, for the defence of which a few guns and troops were sufficient."

At a lecture in London in 1933, as reported in *The Naval and Military Record*, "he expressed his pleasure that we had so few aeroplanes," and in his book we read:—

> The Terror of the Air . . . is the obscene child of a propaganda . . . by oil and aircraft interests.

The Naval and Military Record in 1933 recorded that:

> His chief "platform planks" are that the Navy should return to coal firing, battleships should be reduced to 12,000 tons and 17 knots, that destroyers should be abolished, and that flying is all wrong, at any rate in relation to sea power.

I hear that during the Putney election Captain Acworth has admitted that he was once a member of the "Link," and has argued about his friend Admiral Sir Barry Domville having a raw deal in being detained under 18 B. His election slogan is "God, King and Country."

* * *

The week's most remarkable utterance is the Bishop of Calcutta's letter to the British community of Bengal, quoted in the *Times* of April 20. Bishop Westcott says that the greatest fault of the British has been "a calm assumption of superiority inherent in the British race" which has led them

> to despise and depreciate traditions, customs and practices different from their own which they regard as necessarily inferior because they are foreign.

He points out that industrialism has increased, and its results have not been counteracted "by association with cultured Indians"; the result has been a separation between the races "which is marked by the founding of clubs and institutions from which Indians have been excluded." Either there must be co-operation or strife. "We Britishers as a race have not striven on our part to fulfil these conditions of fruitful co-operation for the development of Indian nationality." He goes on to explain that India is past the stage when tutelage is possible.

> India is rich in men of ability and force of character. It is natural and right that power to control her affairs should be vested in them. I do not wish to dwell on the communal difficulties which militate against a united nation. If the charge which is frequently levelled against the British Government of having consistently fomented Hindu-Moslem antagonism is true, I deeply regret it.

This is wonderfully plain speaking from a British Bishop. I rejoice in it as a portent for the future. The tragedy is that Britain should have largely remained deaf to this Christian message until it was forced on her attention by Japanese guns.

* * *

Why, people ask me, should there be a row at the Zoo? Almost everyone has been conscious of improvements since Julian Huxley became Secretary. To him we attribute the modern architecture in the Zoo, the children's corner, the artists' studio and a dozen other attractive features. Some of us, indeed, were beginning to almost hope that the English Zoo might catch up in ideas with the best continental Zoos, where bars and small cages have long been abolished. And then suddenly we see that Mr. Huxley has been sacked while visiting the United States. Now he is back again and the whole business is to be thrashed out; a body, which includes some of the younger and more intelligent zoologists and other Fellows of the Zoo, are proposing to put up Lord Horder as President, and to insist on Mr. Huxley remaining Secretary. I gather that the present average age of the 21 members of the Council is 67—older, I think, than any British Cabinet or Labour Party Executive has ever been—and that on this body of retired diplomats and other respectable persons, there have been many complaints against Mr. Huxley of which the world has not known. They have not liked his innovations; they have seen no reason why the Zoo should be modernised or why Mr. Huxley should take part in public life, and behave as the head of a great national institution; perhaps they think he should be a sort of super-clerk watching over the daily administration? If so, the nature of his job needs definition. These are the real issues, I believe, behind the row. I am well aware that the public reasons are different. There is the need for economy—fully admitted by Huxley and met by his suggestion that he should remain without pay until the end of the war. There is the fascinating question of the legal right of the Council to suspend the office of Secretary and to refuse to hold an Annual General Meeting under the emergency powers of a Royal Charter. Whatever the legal rights and wrongs and whatever grievances the Council may have against Mr. Huxley, it seems, in any case, to have behaved in a very arbitrary manner and to have ideas of a Zoo which would have been appropriate in 1890.

* * *

A Local Education Authority recently desired to purchase wire netting in order to prevent food in a school dinner club from being devoured by rats. After enquiring from the local War Agriculture Committee, the authority was informed that this was a matter for the Ministry of Health, and application was accordingly made to the Ministry of Health for a permit to buy the wire. This was despatched on February 6th, and five or six days later the Regional Office of the Ministry of Health rang up to ask for further information and to inquire whether other methods of combatting the rats had been tried. The required information was supplied and the Ministry informed the Education Authority that these details would be referred to London for further consideration. After a lapse of a further five days the Education Authority telephoned the Ministry of Health, Regional Office, to ask if anything had been arranged, but received a reply that the exact weight of the wire must be found out before the matter could be further dealt with. This information was given within twenty-four hours. On February 26th, as there had been no further news from the Ministry of Health, the Priority Officer of the Ministry of Health in London was telephoned and asked what was happening, with the result that the Education Authority were informed that the whole matter had now been referred to the Board of Education, evacuated to a South Coast resort, and the Authority was asked to ring them direct about it. This was done, and the Board of Education promised to forward the permit without further delay, after it had been pointed out to them that under the "Waste of Food Order" the Education Authority was just as liable as the ordinary citizen to suffer the penalties which could be imposed. The permit was received by the suppliers on February 27th, and they then discovered that the form would not be necessary because the weight of the wire netting concerned was under 1 cwt.

* * *

I hear from our Radio talks to Germany that Hitler's private income, derived from the Nazi publishing company, which publishes *Mein Kampf* and all the Party newspapers, and from the Hitler levy on the wage bill of German industry, is calculated to amount to no less than £10 million per annum. This is his personal income: some of it is spent in huge presents or bribes. He is certainly the greatest war profiteer in history. If he were in England he would be subject to £9,745,000 income tax annually.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to M. Faraker.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

SIR,—I have read with pleasure the suggestion of Mr. Paul that Hanover-terrace be renamed Australia-terrace. This is, indeed, patriotism at its best. Not only would it show the world that at last we are determined to wage totalitarian war, but it will correct the impression in the Dominions that they have been, to some extent, neglected.—
—Letter to *Brighton and Hove Herald*.

It is certain that the Japanese successes are causing the gravest anxiety in Berlin and semi-panic in Italy.—*Daily Mirror*.

Now that soap is in short supply, is it not every true patriot's duty to grow a beard and moustache? He will save not only soap, but much valuable time.—*Daily Telegraph*.

Concern at the casualness of some wartime marriages is expressed by the Rev. Eric Bates, vicar of St. Peter's, Fulham, London. In his parish magazine he writes:

"On several occasions, when filling in the banns at St. Peter's, the bride-to-be has proved completely ignorant as to the Christian name or civil occupation of her intended husband.

"This fact indicates how little knowledge the parties concerned have of each other, even on the eve of entering into the solemn state of holy matrimony."—*Sunday Express*.

Old Established West End Club requires Oyster-opener.—*Evening Standard*.

Sir Noel Curtis-Bennett said at Westminster: "If we apply the fundamental principles of golf to our relations with our Allies we cannot go far wrong.—*Sunday Graphic*.

JAPANESE SCREEN

(After W. S. Gilbert.)

The Lounge of the Grand Babylon. Japanese Nobles discovered standing and sitting in Free Japanese attitudes.

IF you want to know who we are
We're free gentlemen of Japan.
We've no wish to be singular,
We, too, have a post-war plan.
We're not like the Japs you know,
We abominate Tokio
In the Free Japanese Bureau.

We have taken a furnished suite,
We've moved in on a long-term lease,
When the British have sunk our Fleet
We'll assist with the terms of peace.
All tyranny we detest,
We are minus self-interest,
We're God's gift from the East to the West.

We can tell you of Tojo's tricks,
Free Nippon will shortly rise;
We can tell you the sex of chicks,
Giving aid to our free Allies.
The élites of all Refugees,
We've a pact with Free Siamese,
And all that we ask is squeeze.

SAGITTARIUS

TANGIER: INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONMARK

A THIRD bomb outrage has been attempted against the British Consulate at Tangier. Although none of these attempts has been successful, the first at least provided an excuse for organised anti-British rioting. That this rioting was connived at by the Spanish authorities comes as no surprise to anyone who has been there lately.

Ever since the morning when Spain, taking advantage of the French *débâcle*, sent her lorry loads of troops roaring into the town, it has been Germany who has really controlled the once International Zone, and Tangier has been given over to the activities of Nazi agents, aided by the anti-British propaganda of the Spanish radio and newspapers such as the German-owned *España*.

On a visit to England a short while ago, Sir Samuel Hoare remarked that people would be surprised at the number of friends we had in Spain. The Ambassador failed to add that most of them were powerless, many in concentration camps, and that there is little evidence of liking for England shown by the present rulers of the country.

When I left Tangier, a short time ago, the lights still twinkled across the Straits of Gibraltar as brightly as they had twinkled before the Franco-German armistice, when the whole of French North Africa was blacked out. On the surface life went on much as usual, but as I passed the cafés or sat in the bar of the British-owned El Minza Hotel and watched the refugees, the Gestapo men, and the spies and diplomatic corps of a dozen nations eyeing one another, always watching and listening, I wondered sometimes how long this happy state of events was going to last.

Whether Franco was actually urged by Germany to seize Tangier is not absolutely certain, but the so-called "popular" agitation in Spain for the return of Gibraltar was certainly German-inspired, though in the face of a British loan and food shipments it was allowed to die down.

Franco used the same excuse for his seizure of Tangier as Hitler has so often used: protection. Spain took over Tangier in order to protect the interests of her own nationals and to preserve order in the town. It is true that there is, besides the British colony, a large Italian colony. But their members seem to have evolved their own system of live and let live. The British run the local Bus Company; the Italians travel by it. The Italians own many of the shops and cafés; but in spite of the British Consular Black List, they have many British customers.

Tangier is full of refugees from all the countries of Europe now under the Nazi heel. French from the Occupied Zone, Belgians, Dutch, Norwegians, Danes, Jews from Czechoslovakia and Poland and from Germany itself; real refugees and sham refugees.

The largest body of refugees used to be those Spaniards who had chosen the losing side in the Civil War. Professional men, artisans, labourers, I knew many of them. Two I shall always remember. They are both dead: the Spaniards entered Tangier with their lists prepared. The first was a shoemaker, crippled and half blind, a refugee from Malaga via a French concentration camp. The soldiers came for him the first day, but he escaped them. For almost seven months he lived in the open, in woods and ditches, all through the bitter cold and wet. Then one day he came home. Let them come for him if they wanted to. They came for him the next day. There was a shot and they found his body just inside the door. I saw the ambulance outside the row of workmen's cottages when they came to take him away.

The second I met in a military prison. An ex-army officer who had not gone over to Franco; he had been arrested immediately the Spaniards entered Tangier. He had been in prison for months, patiently awaiting his execution. We were cell companions for seventeen hours. I had been summarily arrested on no charge, searched for arms and locked up, my demands to be allowed to communicate with the British Consulate refused.

As we played draughts with little screws of coloured paper, he said: "Although we feel that you betrayed both us and democracy, England is our only hope." He shared his food with me; they gave me none, and in those seventeen hours he became a rounded figure to me, more complete than many people I have known for years.

On one of the several journeys for cross-examination which occupied the night, and at all of which I was refused leave to communicate with the Consulate, a friendly Moorish sentry agreed to take out a scribbled note for me. A few hours later the British Minister himself arrived. He said: "I shall do my best to get you out." He did, and after some hours more the cell door opened.

I never discovered why I had been arrested, but owing to the "delicacy of diplomatic relations," the point was never pressed. At any rate I was luckier than the British Consul-General from Marrakesh and his clerk, who spent four days under arrest a little later and with as little explanation.

By this time the Gestapo had set up its headquarters unopposed if unsung. I have often sat at the next table to its chief; good-looking, grey-haired, steely-eyed, the waiters hurried to serve him, while the refugees eyed him askance as one by one the flimsy barriers of their temporary security were torn away.

Ordinance followed ordinance, Spanish police arrived. The non-Spanish members of the Administration were replaced by Spaniards. One by one the solemn promises given to the British and American Legations have been broken. The Mendoub, the Sultan's representative, was ordered to leave his residence within twenty-four hours; it was wanted by the Germans. He got out. The band played *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* as the swastika was hoisted, and the Moors raised their arms in the Nazi salute.

The Powers were informed that the *Khalifa* Mouley Hassan would come from the Spanish Zone on a State visit to instal in Tangier a *pasha* as his own representative. So by a piece of political rough stuff lightly cloaked in the trappings of ceremony, Tangier lost its direct representation at the Sultan's Court at Rabat.

America does not even admit Spain's right to be in Morocco, and the American Minister did not appear. The British Minister appeared, as did the other Ministers and Consuls. The show compared favourably with the brilliant spectacles which the French stage in the south. The bright, flowing Moorish costumes, the banners, and the magnificently caparisoned horses, their saddles richly embroidered in coloured silks and gold thread, made a wonderful sight in the clear sunshine of the first spring day, while German and Spanish planes roared overhead.

The *Khalifa* went back to Tetuan; the *pasha* stayed. Tangier settled back to watching and the never silent buzz of rumour died down a little. The refugees, the Jews and the Gestapo men sat and listened. The net is gradually closing and it is becoming more and more difficult to leave. All persons other than American and British must first obtain a Spanish police permit from Tetuan. In theory the exit permit is freely given. In practice it is refused to anyone of military age who might wish to join the British or Free French forces, to any Jew or political refugee from the conquered countries to whom Lisbon might be a stepping stone to England and freedom from fear; in fact, to put it briefly, to anyone to whom it is in the Nazi interest to refuse it.

E. G.

Bring out your dead

PAPER

ITALY

I

I wonder—is Benozzo still a-flower,
And does the spring still mount the Umbrian hill?
History, a plain, and Italy the tower
That dominates; this is high tide of ill.
Tyrants before; feuds; daggers turning grey
Conspiracies to scarlet; tyrants now;
The Roman worker on the Appian way
Bowed, but resilient; hunger's broken plow
Driven across the land. *Their* Trasymene,
Your Abyssinia. Soldiers, peasants, men
Stifled, with raging hearts that wait the day
To hurl their satrap from the outraged scene.
And will they spare when answer rings to:
When?
This blood comes first—then all their flowers of May.

II

Fiorelli . . . hilltops . . . blue of the hyacinth
Under Orvieto, and Cortona's spring;
The cow is led to her curvetting king;
Gone, winter's shrouds; and in the ruined plinth
Valerian reddens—Time bears on its bones,
River-deliverer—and the rain's spears
Are conquerors turned to lovers; April bears
While the gold stonecrop's busy in the stones.
In the year's firstness, *prima vera*. This
Perennial mystery I see not more
Doubtful than is your change—your change not less
Certain than is that fury on the shore,
That fact of waves tides' ultimates express,
Risen, like you, from *shall be*, to: *it is*.

NANCY CUNARD

LIQUIDATING ILLITERACY

I MUST confess I did not realise that we still had illiteracy in this country. I thought the illiterate had been liquidated long ago.

Of course, I did not assume that the whole population had begun to lisp in French or had learnt pure arithmetic or anything of the sort. It didn't enter my head. However, it seemed to me quite simple and even possible that everyone could read, write, and sign his name.

But it turned out to be otherwise.

This is what happened the other day on the liquidation of illiteracy front.

Last month at a very large works, the name of which we needn't mention, the committee decided to put pressure on the illiterate. After all, the New Year was coming along. And then the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution was in the offing. And then again the New Year.

Yet still the illiterate were not completely liquidated. A bad thing. A thing which showed our lack of culture. A special effort had to be made.

So it was decided to make a special effort.

The President of the Cultural Committee called all his assistants together, and they examined the pay rolls for the last few months, in order to find out which of the employees signed their names when they received their wages, and how they signed, and how many couldn't sign their names at all.

The result was that they discovered a whole army of illiterates at the works. More than a hundred. And out of that hundred only thirty attended the school for the liquidation of illiteracy. Obviously, the rest were dodging being liquidated.

The President of the Cultural Committee called his assistants together again and told them:

"Listen, mates, we must put pressure on them. What about a general meeting of the illiterates tomorrow at eight o'clock in the evening? Make it known, will you?"

The assistants, young and eager fellows, tackled the matter at once, and began to discuss the how and when of it among themselves.

Well, the evening of the following day came along. The clock struck eight. The Cultural Committee arrived all complete with the President. The President, of course, brought along his portfolio. They all sat round the table. Only the illiterates weren't there. There was no sign of them.

"Brothers," said the President, "What about the illiterates? Where are they? Or perhaps you forgot to announce the meeting?"

"We beg your pardon," the others said, "we certainly announced it. We stuck up a notice in every workshop."

So they settled down to wait. "After all," they thought, "the illiterate haven't got the same sense of responsibility as other people; they don't mind being late. We've got to wait for them."

It struck nine, and still no one appeared. One fellow turned up, but he proved to be able to read and write. He had just wandered in by mistake.

At last the President said:

"Brothers, but the illiterates are illiterate. How could they read your announcements?"

Then the assistants got rather agitated.

"It's quite true," they said. "They couldn't have read them."

So that on the following day they chose a special man to be the announcer. He went round all the workshops and shouted at the top of his voice about the meeting.

This, of course, made all the difference. The oral approach proved to be the correct one. About four persons came, excluding the President. So the Cultural Committee laid into these four.

MIHAIL ZOSHCHENKO

BARTOK AND OTHERS

Boosey and Hawkes Concert, April 15th

This enterprising and largely successful concert included Alan Rawsthorne's *Theme and Variations* for String Quartet, songs by Mahler and Ivor Gurney, a suite for piano by Villa-Lobos, and the first English performance of Bartok's *Sixth String Quartet*.

Rawsthorne's Variations are, it appears, the Finale of a Quartet, the only copy of which now languishes irrecoverably in Finland. This is regrettable, for the reconstructed portion is most attractive and confirms the high opinion one had formed of this young composer's abilities. The quality of imagination displayed is romantic, and the harmonic scheme though "modern," is not rebarbatively so. The music is well laid out for the instruments, but the theme did not seem definite enough to make its presence felt in the variations; so that the total impression was rather that of a series of diversions, or mood pictures.

With the Bartok we were taken into the presence of a proved master. These quartets of his have not become successively easier to listen to: the last three in particular have the severity and take-it-or-leave-it quality of the last quartets of Beethoven; but whereas the first two exploited the rhetoric of drama, and the third that of rhythm, the last three have tended more and more towards a purely poetical magic that works by the chemical agency of a constantly recurring element. The Sixth Quartet is planned in four movements, each one prefaced by the same little wandering refrain, of a pale and ghostly sadness, which is gradually made to discover its secret by means of what is put on either side of it. This refrain (the scoring, especially at its second appearance, is of an exquisite and touching beauty) acts like a spell, of the same order as those wonderful lines:—

The baillie beareth the bell away;
The lily, the rose, the rose I lay.

In the end it has the stage all to itself and flowers out into a counterpoint of astonishing loveliness, the more profound by reason of the colour the theme has acquired in the course of the three previous movements. The work does not take very long to perform, but is as subtle in form and as concentrated in expression as Sibelius's Fourth Symphony; so that the strain of listening to it is considerable. It must also be extremely difficult to play, and all honour is due to the Laurance Turner Quartet for the courage and conscientiousness of their performance, though it would be idle to pretend that they encompassed this work as adequately as they did the Rawsthorne.

The rest of the programme calls for little comment. Miss Astra Desmond sang Mahler and Gurney with admirable wit and sensibility, though one missed the orchestral accompaniment to the former, especially in that most moving of songs, "*Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*." Miss Harriet Cohen played the *Cirandas* of Villa-Lobos with apparent conviction of their value—a conviction which, however, she strikingly failed to communicate to me. The idiom of these dances is as stale as the day before yesterday's newspaper; they have next to no melodic interest; and the writing is clotted and muddy. An occasional rhythmic ingenuity was the only relief from a general impression of overpowering dullness. One wonders what the composer's five (!) operas can possibly consist of. . . .

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Full Swing" at the Palace Theatre

Partisans of swing may complain that the title of this show is misleading, for the swing in it is etiolated. But the general public will crowd to the Palace—and all the more enthusiastically because the ingredients are familiar: stars that have long been favourites in situations that excite no undue surmise. Miss Cicely Courtneidge is a glorious droll, and she successively delights as an elderly secretary, an intoxicating spy, an arty mime-dancer and a bearded sailor. To provide this variety of roles a plot about sabotage and a secret *dossier* has been contrived—it might have been simpler to cut the cackle and make the show a revue. But Mr. Keneth Kent's performance as a villain is so brilliant that one forgives the dowdiness of the plot. The chorus, being English, is not at its best in the Rumba, but has vitality and good looks. Mr. Jack Hulbert guys his own mannerisms very cleverly; Miss Nora Swinburne and Mr. G. de Warfaz are too good for the material they are given. The decor begins with a touch of surrealism and shows even the influence of Henry Moore's string-sculpture, but immediately relapses into the old convention. As musical comedies go, a gay, lavish, brightly coloured affair.

Sickert Exhibition at Temple Newsam, Leeds

It is to be hoped that after the war a really ambitious exhibition will commemorate the pre-eminence of Sickert. Meanwhile two hundred of his works in every medium are to be seen until May 11th at Temple Newsam, near Leeds. The Leeds Gallery has had the advantage of being able to pick paintings and drawings from the autumn exhibition in the National Gallery; to which have been added not only forty other oils but nearly a hundred etchings. These were not represented in London, but they are an important part of Sickert's work and philosophy. Before he was fully a painter, the little plates of the Eighties, in good number at Temple Newsam, had shown what a vivid and distinguished grasp of the visible was to come. When he had painted great pictures, he remained an avowed illustrator and broadcast their subjects by etching reproductions for sale in large issues at a low price. Yet Sickert was born to paint. It was the most important of his natural functions, more absorbing and enjoyable than eating and drinking, even than talking and making love. Form and design were secondary to the first business of laying on the liquid colour so that it gives the very taste of life, life as it was seen by a connoisseur of living, detached and often ironical, but rarely unkind. The colour is, more than of anything, the colour of the light. It is positively in a new light that Sickert sees each of his subjects. Hence the range and variety which are his greatest qualities. In the side-lit rooms at Temple Newsam pains have been taken to let the light fall, as far as possible, as it does in each picture; and one realises how much of the punch is lost in the usual top-lit gallery. By following the Moore-Piper-Sutherland Exhibition with this Sickert show, Leeds has set an example to all provincial museums; the director and trustees deserve every congratulation upon their taste and enterprise. Since the war, thanks to C.E.M.A., definite progress has been made in showing contemporary art in the provinces. But the museums in most of our largest cities are still inadequately alive to their opportunities and responsibilities.

Correspondence

PLANNING AT THE TOP

SIR,—Those of us who took part, in pre-war days, in the agitation for a Ministry of Supply and a Ministry of National Service, never contemplated that the latter would be combined with the Ministry of Labour. What we wanted—and have not yet got—was two Ministers of equal status with full powers over the production and man-power of the country as a whole.

Mr. Lloyd George's Government is much abused nowadays, but it did win the last war, and we can still profit by its experience.

Neither Mr. Lyttelton nor Mr. Bevin possesses powers comparable to those exercised in that Government by Mr. Churchill as Minister of Munitions, and Sir Auckland Geddes as Minister of National Service. When you say, in your current issue, that *all* manpower, including that for the Armed Forces, should be allocated by the Minister of National Service, and that such of it as is assigned to industry should be dealt with by a (separate) Ministry of Labour under the Minister of Production, you go to the root of the problem.

On the question of a Combined General Staff, may I put in a plea that attention should not be focussed exclusively on the apex in Whitehall, but upon the fighting services as a whole? What is it that those who advocate the establishment of a "Great General Staff" really desire? It is best to face facts. They want nothing less than that Mr. Churchill shall be supplanted as Minister of Defence, and the higher direction of strategy confided to other hands. This raises a personal issue of immense magnitude, involving the Premiership and the Government. It should not be confused with the establishment of High *Commands*, and the combined training of staff officers to man them.

From a technical point of view the German General Staff is probably the most efficient machine for conducting war that has ever been devised. It has been brilliantly described by the Prime Minister, who compared it in the last war, under the "Papacy" of Ludendorff, to the Jesuits of the Middle Ages. Its members eschewed publicity, and worked under figure-head Commanders-in-Chief. But they were present at every headquarters, efficient, relentless, ubiquitous—a close fraternity who spoke the same language and wielded immense power. A typical product was Hoffmann, the real victor of Tannenberg, and the most consistently successful commander on either side. As in this war, they moved remorselessly from one tactical triumph to another, and shipwrecked their State only when their power extended beyond the military to the purely political sphere.

The need for an organisation of this kind is greatly increased by three-dimensional warfare, and it is of vital importance that it should not be confined to the Commandoes. A number of the ablest younger officers of all three Services should be selected without further delay and given a combined training for subsequent Staff duties at the headquarters of all units taking part in future operations. Nothing short of this can ensure an adequate comprehension of the problems which have to be faced, or effective co-operation between the Services, at every level.

In February, 1940, I wrote, in a letter to *The Times*: "The process we are now going through is almost too familiar. It happened with regard to aeroplanes, shelters, oats, A.A. guns, food storage, a Ministry of Supply, a national register, and—finally—conscription. For as long as possible the Government proceed along existing and orthodox lines. They are then warned of specific dangers ahead both in Parliament and in the Press. Disregarded at first, the warnings grow louder, until the apprehension of the House of Commons is aroused to explosive point. The necessary concessions are then made."

How many times has this process been repeated since then? And is it too much to hope that it may now cease, together with the recurrent political "crises" which are its inevitable accompaniment?

R.A.F. Station. ROBERT BOOTHBY

PALESTINE

SIR,—The Palestine problem cannot be solved in the timorous manner suggested by Mr. Hyamson. Even if we ignore the plain meaning of the Mandate and the tragic plight of European Jewry, we are still left in Palestine with a situation not unlike that in India. The Arabs constitute two-thirds of the population of Palestine; the Jews form two-thirds of the economic and tax-paying capacity of the country. Neither Jew nor Arab regards himself as a "Palestinian" and neither will consent to be ruled by the other. As the Peel Commission pointed out, unless some entirely new approach is made neither Jew nor Arab will attain self-government, and British domination will continue indefinitely. A solution may be possible along the following lines: (1) Attach the predominantly Arab area of Central Palestine to Transjordan and constitute the enlarged territory as an Arab State; (2) Constitute Galilee and the coastal plain as a Jewish State; (3) Unite the two States in a Palestine Federation; (4) Constitute Jerusalem and the Southern Desert as Federal territory in which the citizens of both States would have equal rights; (5) Safeguard the Holy Places.

These suggestions, I think, embody the constructive principles laid down in the Peel Report; they are in the spirit of the present Government's proposals for India and offer real advantages to both Arab and Jew. SAMSON WRIGHT

EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE

SIR,—Mr. Davenport evades the point.

There are black sheep in every section of society. This, however, does not jusitfy him in saying that Directors of industrial companies as a class are misusing the E.P.T. regulations to raise their standard of living.

I asked him if he could give me factual support for his statement. This he says he cannot do. Let me now make another offer. I know the trading account details of at least 10 companies of whose Directors his statement is untrue. Can he give me from equal knowledge the names of as many companies where it is true. L. J. CADBURY

The Davids, Northfield, Birmingham, 31.

SIR,—Mr. Nicholas Davenport's reply to Mr. Cadbury's letter in your current issue indicates a prejudiced mind, so prone to wild generalisation and to absurd exaggeration as to be quite unreliable.

The Directory of Directors does not suggest that Mr. Davenport has very wide-spread directorial activities. I should even venture to guess that my modest self may have wider experience in those directions. And from that wider experience (if wider indeed it be), I am able to tell him that when he says, "Before E.P.T. not all directors were living and travelling 'first class.' Now they are," the last three words of that statement are merely ridiculously untrue. GUY P. DAWNAY

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Mr. Davenport replies: "What sore places some people have! I wrote: 'He (the worker) knows very well that his employers are meeting *their* extra cost of living by receiving bigger tax-free expenses from their companies to the debit of Excess Profits Tax. He has probably noticed that the directors' standard of living—measured in entertainment, motor cars, food, drink, cigars and travelling—has gone up and not down.' These statements are surely both fair and moderate. I *have* noticed such things and I have no reason to believe I am a less accurate and truthful observer than Mr. Cadbury or General Dawnay. General Dawnay, who looked me up in the Directory of Directors, forgets that that work of reference does

NEW BOOKS APRIL 30

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An Ulsterwoman in England, 1924-1941
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The Revolt of the Serbs against the Turks (1804-1813)
By W. A. MORISON. 8/6 net
The aim of this book is to make available to the English-reading public a part of the epics which has till now found no English translator, and it is perhaps not unfitting that it should appear at a moment when the Yugoslavs are groaning under the heel of an even more deadly foe. These translations (printed parallel with the Serbian text) are preceded by an introduction explaining the origin of the ballads and discussing questions of form and method in translating them.

Cambridge University Press

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JONATHAN CAPE

not necessarily include private companies. I can assure him that my experience entitled me to make these statements. I do not accuse *all* directors of cheating Excess Profits Tax. It is perfectly legal for directors to charge more for their expenses in view of the rise in the cost of directorial living. I did not mean to suggest that *all* directors had increased their standard of living. Like Mr. Toulmin, I have not been paid or claimed extra expenses as a director since the war. I have been under no temptation and do not count this as any merit. I *have* had information of actual cheating of Excess Profits Tax and reported one of these cases, as a dutiful citizen, to the Government Department concerned."

ED., *N.S. & N.*]

COAL FOR VICTORY

SIR,—The basic causes of the coal shortage do not lie primarily in acquisitive ownership, unprogressive management, absenteeism and shortage of labour. First, the miners are exceedingly reluctant to overexert themselves for the sake of the private profit of the owners. Secondly, in the past, increased effort by individuals or teams of miners on piecework bargains has often resulted in their earning a relatively excessive wage. Managements maintained the right to reduce bargain rates when wages exceeded a certain figure, and this right was widely exercised in the days when the introduction of machines at the coal face cut labour by 30 per cent. This led to deep-rooted mistrust and low wages (before the war datalers up here earned 6s. 8d. per shift). The men have long memories, and whatever guarantees the owners may give now, they fear that increased output will lead to cuts in piece rates.

The Essential Works Order has given the men the framework of joint control through the Pit Production Committees. But these are tending to become the willing tools of conservative and inefficient managements. Union officials serving on them are often elected for bargaining ability and long service, and few are able to deal on equal terms with the management with technical and organisational problems. The younger and more technically trained miners know well enough where improvements can be made but fear that constructive criticism may lead to victimisation.

The Mineworkers Federation has failed to inspire the men or give them a clear lead on the nationalisation issue. What assurance is there that there will not be a return to the old conditions after the war: strikes, low wages, slack time, unemployment? The miners are saturated with anti-absenteeism and more-output propaganda. They know better than anyone what stands in the way of increased output and resent all the onus being laid on them.

The real solution lies in common ownership. Panels of progressive mining experts in each district must survey each colliery and ruthlessly eliminate all bottlenecks from coal face to wagon. They will find that limiting factors will lie chiefly in outworn systems of working, bad layout and organisation, inadequate haulage facilities, shortage of supplies, material and plant, insufficient shaft capacity and surface arrangements, shortage of capital, unjust wage agreements, and so on. Nationalisation should be first concerned with safety, secondly with producing the coal so urgently needed, and thirdly with guaranteeing security and a fair wage to the miner. If the owners, the Federation and the Mines Department will not put their house in order, it will have to be put in order for them. And a drastic spring cleaning is urgently needed. Thus only can the miners be given a sense of part ownership, joint control and collective responsibility which will inspire a dynamic which will spread far beyond the mines.

UNDERGROUND WORKER

SHORTAGE OF NURSES

SIR,—When Miss Florence Horsbrugh complains of 5,000 nurses too few in the London area, she does not allow for the unattractiveness of the profession, due largely to the unbending, unsympathetic attitude of those in authority, especially in the large training hospitals. Thus a nurse guilty of a trivial misdemeanour, outside working hours, may be summoned to the Matron, and punished with a severity only justifiable on the grounds of grave dereliction of nursing duty. There is little sense of proportion in fitting the punishment to the crime, and a constant atmosphere of supervision both on duty and off, girls being treated as though they are inherently careless, idle and immoral, and therefore requiring constant very hard work and separation from all normal social relaxation. What is the remedy? In discussions with nurses of different stages of training and from different schools, I have repeatedly been told that the nurses themselves cannot enforce change. To do so would not only require a courage, leadership and unanimity of purpose of which girls from 18-25 are seldom capable, but it would involve a very grave risk that patients would suffer also. A threat of strike action would never be considered by these girls, who put the welfare of their patients far above their own. Changes are urgently needed to modernise this Victorian atmosphere, but they will never be forthcoming until the general public insist, and the more enlightened senior sisters have the courage to lead their own profession. Matrons, sisters and honorary medical staff must work together against the reactionary elements, and insist that the probationers and trained nurses upon whom they rely for efficient care of the patients are treated as intelligent individual and responsible women. Nothing else will ensure a full supply of happy and devoted nurses.

M.B., B.CH.

PRE-RAPHAELITES

SIR,—In his review of Mr. William Gaunt's *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy*, Mr. Raymond Mortimer proffers various suggestions as to where Rossetti might have met Fanny Cornforth: her own unlikely story, "the old Surrey Gardens," Mr. Gaunt's "perhaps the Strand," and Charles Ricketts' "the Embankment." Both writer and reviewer seem to ignore the fact that the redoubtable Fanny was originally married to a porter called Hughes, who was employed at the School of Art, then located at Somerset House. One of the Brotherhood, William Devereux—who, incidentally, "discovered" Miss Siddal—was the son of the Director of the school, so there is every likelihood in the world that Rossetti first set eyes on his Cockney "stinner" at Somerset House ("perhaps the Strand" is, to that extent, right). Miss Violet Hunt—Alfred's daughter, not Holman's—in a book crammed with information about the Pre-Raphaelites, told an amusing story of Fanny introducing herself to Rossetti by throwing a handful of nutshells at him.

What does Mr. Mortimer mean when he describes the stockinged Rossetti "walking all the way from Highgate to Kentish Town"? Rossetti's wife killed herself in their rooms at Chatham Place, Blackfriars—Pimlico, if you like, but hardly Highgate. And the paragraph Mr. Mortimer quotes so enthusiastically gives a largely inaccurate picture of the Sid as a "melancholy doll." Sphinx-like she seems to have been; a doll she was not. Rossetti damped rather than fired her little talents. His miserable, selfish treatment of her—ending in the anticlimax of the exhumation of his dreary poems, so grandiosely buried with her—ruined her short life and caused her tragic death before she was thirty. This extraordinary woman seems to be fated to be damned with faint praise, though Swinburne, amongst others, admired her and Ruskin hailed her as a genius—which is only faintly funny. Beginning with her brother-in-law, W. M. Rossetti, probably more misrepresentative nonsense has been written about her than any other woman of her period.

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HARRY BALLAM

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The Kremlin and the People

2nd printing before publication. 5s. net

HAMISH HAMILTON

BOOKS IN GENERAL

MR. GAUNT'S *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (Cape, 10s. 6d.), which I had the pleasure of recommending a fortnight ago, left me feeling inquisitive about the other Victorian painters, particularly Landseer and Frith. These were the two chief butts of the Pre-Raphaelites, though to-day when one compares *Derby Day* with *Farewell to England*, the similarities seem more striking than the differences. Unluckily very few Victorian paintings are now available to the visitor. Could we not be treated to an exhibition, drawn partly from the Guildhall collection and the Chantrey Bequest? This would provide great entertainment at small risk, for if a bomb descended such works could be cheaply replaced. I wish that Mr. Gaunt would give us a book rescuing from deserved oblivion the idols of the Royal Academy. How few of us now know anything of Maclise and Martineau, Phillip and Egg, Leighton and Tadema? Their pictures, it is true, retain only a period interest, a dusty, pathetic appeal like that of a stage jewel worn by Rachel, a case of stuffed birds, or a musical-box that whispers rustily a Cremorne valse. But the social scene in which the painters toadied and bargained and swaggered is beautifully comical.

Never has "art" brought such magnificent rewards as during the Victorian heyday. The successful painter, usually of humble origin, sauntered leonine from one stately home to another, shooting with a railway promoter, hunting with a duke, stalking with a Prince Consort. Alone with him in palm-houses, beautiful women—such was his prestige—almost forgot to be modest; and the most parsimonious manufacturers competed, *tête baissée*, for the products of his brush. On Sundays in the Season a procession of landaus blocked the road before the palatial mansion he had built; and in a studio embellished with armour and tapestries the Academician received, with duly discriminating deference or condescension, the most eminent statesmen, scientists, and authors. When the first Varnishing Day came, he hastened anxiously to discover where his works had been placed; and, if necessary, he could rapidly heighten their colour to place the neighbouring pictures in the shade. (The R.A. had the right to show eight pictures, all "on the line.") The exhibition opened, and a prince of painters could hope for the ultimate glory—the erection of a railing in front of his picture to protect it from the enthusiasm of the crowd. (Frith applied for and obtained this rare privilege six times.) Often the exhibits had already been sold, sometimes even before they were painted. *The Railway Station* fetched £4,500; *The Monarch of the Glen*, £7,245. Frith chronicles the immensely increased prices his pictures always brought when re-sold by their original purchasers: what shares, he insinuates, could have brought a fatter profit? But in the long run, Ichabod, such masterpieces have proved the worst of investments. I know of a Rosa Bonheur bought for £4,000 that was sold recently for £60, the value of the gold-leaf on its massive frame.

May not these Victorian glories know a revival, somebody asks? I doubt it—but not because of any very firm faith in the taste of the future. Indeed, the sense of quality is likely to become increasingly rare in a world presumably dominated by machinery, cinematographs and the popular press, a world, moreover, in which public bodies will be the only important purchasers. But the taste of the uninstructed is always for novelties, not for what similarly innocent persons liked in the past; and so I see no more future for Landseer and Leighton than for the popular novelists who were their contemporaries, G. P. R. James or Mrs. Lynn Lynton.

Strangely and regrettably there is no adequate life of Landseer. Born in 1802, the son of an engraver, he became a pupil of Benjamin Haydon, who with wasted fervour implored him to study the Elgin marbles. When he was thirteen, he had a picture accepted by the Royal Academy; five years later he won fame with his *Alpine Mastiffs Reanimating a Distressed Traveller*. He was elected an A.R.A. at 24, an R.A. at 29. He won the interest of the Queen, who entrusted him with the portraiture successively of little Princess Victoria's macaw, of "trusted gillies and keepers," and of her royal self. A frequent guest at Balmoral, he gave the Queen lessons in etching. But his prodigious success, we are told, deteriorated his character. The *Times* proclaimed that he was the Shakespeare of dogs. He became stiff with his old friends, he frequented only the powerful, he affected an aristocratic drawl. Later his sight began to fail, he took to brandy, and became subject to hallucinations. He never married, and the rumour of his engagement to Rosa Bonheur seems to have been based merely upon a public sense of what would be fitting. He had, I think, marked talent, and in an earlier age might have been an honourable painter of the third order. But he lived during the *débâcle* of the painting tradition, and swam downstream. "If people knew as much about painting as I do," he once remarked, "they would never buy my pictures." He died at the age of 71, leaving £200,000.

About Frith we are better informed: he wrote three volumes of Reminiscences. He outlived not only his powers but his reputation, and died, I believe no longer rich, at the age of 90. He was born in 1819, his father holding what he calls "a position of trust in the family of the then owner of Studley Royal." Probably he was the butler, for he later became the landlord of an inn. When he asked the young William if he would like to become an artist, the answer was "I don't much care about it . . . I should like to be an auctioneer." The father, however, was obdurate; young Frith was pushed into painting; and at the age of 23, having already sold a picture for a hundred guineas, was commissioned by Dickens to paint Dolly Varden and Kate Nickleby. He never gave up costume-pieces, but in 1854 he discovered his *forte*, the anecdotic painting of contemporary life. His first essay in this sort, *Ramsgate Sands*, delighted the Queen, who purchased it and had the painter presented to her. "I retired from the presence of Royalty as soon as I could do so with propriety: but not before I had experienced the truth of what I had often heard, namely, that the Prince Consort and the Queen knew quite as much about art as most painters." The professional critics, on the other hand, impressed Frith by their ignorance, and he soon made it a rule never to read a word they wrote. Frith, who considered Ruskin "a mountebank," had no sympathy with all the fashionable talk about the Italian Primitives. "He who misses Siena will not miss much besides dirt and discomfort"; and Botticelli "so often disfigures his pictures by bad drawing and worse painting, and by such a revelling in ugliness—notably seen in his 'Venuses' in our collection—as to make it a wonder to me how admirers can be found for them." "Impressionism in which neither drawing, colouring, nor truth in any form appears, I pass by with the contempt it merits." Frith was ingenuous but not without modesty. About one of his pictures he notes: "Of course, alas! it is inferior to the old masters in every quality. It is a good thing as times go."

Derby Day, a portrait of Dickens, *The Railway Station*, *The Marriage of the Prince of Wales*, *The Road to Ruin*, *The Race for Wealth*, *The Private View*—triumph followed triumph. "Try to do better," Frith noted in his diary in 1868, "get newer subjects—all depends on subject." Accordingly he offered as much as two hundred pounds as a reward to anyone who provided a subject he could use. Mr. William Whiteley was one of the many who hurried to make a suggestion: *Whiteley's at Four o'clock in the Afternoon*.

> I should leave it to your discretion, sir, to choose either the inside of the place or the outside. If you take the former, you would have the aristocracy making their purchases. You might introduce the young ladies who do me the honour to assist in my establishment, many of whom are very pretty. Then there are what are called shopmen, with fine heads, and every conceivable detail for your back and foregrounds.

Mr. Whiteley concluded by saying that never in his life had he spent a shilling on advertising. Mrs. Maxwell (the popular novelist, Miss Braddon) offered an even more startling theme.

> Scene I.—The Husband's Friend.
>
> A Queen Anne drawing-room—Afternoon Tea—Wife in tea-gown—Winter fire-glow—Children at play on hearth-rug—Husband introducing college friend.
>
> Scene II.—The Temptation.
>
> A conservatory—Wife in ball-dress—Husband's friend on his knees, his face tragic with the great struggle—A ball-room and dancers seen through curtained archway.
>
> Scene III.—The Mother's Farewell.
>
> Nursery—The two children asleep in their cots—Wife in travelling-dress, or in ball-dress with fur cloak thrown over it—Bends over boy's cot, taking her farewell—Lover in shadow of threshold.
>
> Scene IV.—The Recognition.
>
> Bois de Boulogne or Champs Elysées—Husband and children walking; older now—Wife passing in carriage—The eldest girl recognises her mother and tries to go to her—Father holds her back.
>
> Scene V.
>
> South of France—Wife dying in hotel bedroom—Husband summoned to the bedside—Lover seated in balcony, back turned towards the room, head resting on folded arms—Blue sea, palm-trees, etc.

"Alas," says Frith, "I feared to undertake the subject . . . I think I know my public; 'tis a strange hodge-podge, tolerant of grossness in Hogarth, but intolerant—properly so, I think—of an approach to details by a modern painter, such as the great moralist found necessary to enforce his lessons." (He had indeed been severely censured for depicting a lady, seen at Homburg, in the act of lighting a cigarette.) A little late, he perceives his objection may reflect upon Miss Braddon, and hastens to explain: "I need scarcely say that Mrs. Maxwell is incapable of proposing any such drawbacks . . . but I confess I shrank from the painfulness of her subject." His friend Egg was less timid, and it would be interesting to know whether the three pictures upon a similar theme in the Tate were the result of Miss Braddon's suggestion.

Talents that in any other age would, one suspects, have brought only a modest living, secured for these painters an affluence and a social elevation such as few even of the greatest artists have enjoyed. Here is one explanation. The art-collecting of the eighteenth-century aristocracy had given pictures a prestige value even greater than that of diamonds and pearls, because they were tokens not only of wealth but of culture. The rapidly rising industrial bourgeoisie understood nothing of art but required pictures, no less than plate, parks and equipages, to support their position and gratify their pride. The objects in gilt frames, provided by a Frith and a Landseer, possessed the prestige value of works of art, and at the same time—unlike the smoky canvases of Domenichino or the Carracci—were easily understood. The painters thus prospered by a sort of legerdemain, enabling their customers simultaneously to buy what they liked and to suppose they were buying what would do them credit. It is to be noticed, however, that the aristocrats of the period, despite their Grand Tours, and inherited masterpieces, were almost equally eager victims of this unconscious fraud. Similarly in our own time grandees have habitually had themselves painted by Laszlo, and have hung the sad results among family portraits from the pencils of van Dyck and Gainsborough. The truth, one fears, is that only a very small proportion of any class at any time, whatever their education, care genuinely for painting. A Frith could not have passed unimproved through the training of a Renaissance or eighteenth-century artist; but the tasteless rich of an earlier period managed to console themselves with the hardly more valuable productions of a Gerard Dou. I suspect that whenever good taste has prevailed in a civilised society, a few artists and cultivated bourgeois have been chiefly responsible.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE RUSSIAN NOVEL

An Introduction to the Russian Novel. By JANKO LAVRIN. *Methuen.* 7s. 6d.

This is a short, intelligent and astonishingly comprehensive study of the Russian novelists from Pushkin to the present day and is, indeed, all that an introduction of this kind should be, for it makes the link between life and literature. Not only does our ignorance of the Russian historical background make the link important; the Russian novel has been so coloured by a definite national mood in every decade, there have been such profound schisms in national belief, that to know them is essential. The special refinements of literary criticism—how much of Dostoevsky, for example, is due to the late arrival of the Romantic movement in Russia; where *Don Quixote* has influenced, or where *Gil Blas*, Byron or Dickens—belong to a later stage of taste. So Mr. Lavrin must be praised for avoiding "deep" generalities on the one hand, and the academic catalogue on the other, and giving instead a modest, self-effacing book which is written with precision and discrimination.

If we try to define the quality which has given the Russian novel its extraordinary prestige, realism is our clinching word. One can guess one social reason for this frame of mind: the awkward Western facade which was fitted to the Slavonic structure left incongruous gaps. The Russian novelists have excelled in describing boredom, monotony, the hours of the day, because life has to fill these gaps between idea and fulfilment, because they had fallen between two stools. Yet beside Russian realism, there has always been a lyrical and even rhetorical force, something heroic, which comes out in Gogol's *Taras Bulba*, in his famous address to Russia in *Dead Souls*, in Tolstoy's animal spirits and in Gorki's primitive stories. And there has always been a subject beyond the immediate subject which has lifted Russian realism a few inches above the earth. That subject is the fate of Russia itself. In this hour, the novelist seems to say, as I wash my feet, mortgage my estate or seduce the station-master's daughter, the fate of Russia is in the balance. And who says Russia, says humanity. There is a hunger for the future. The size of the country, the long distances that can separate people or haunt them with an unreasonable hope, have made journeys an important part of the Russian novel. (As they originally were in English: not only Byron's *Childe Harold*, but Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, it is curious to learn, had a definite influence in Russia.) And we, indeed, have the sensation of space and timelessness, as though the characters of the Russian novelists were travellers, stranded for a few years in the course of some inner and predestined voyage. And then, the Russian novel appears to be the fruit of extraordinary paradoxes: the sense of freedom conveyed by writers who had practically none, the sense of completeness conveyed by people dominated by the idea of fate, the sense of spiritual energy and hope conveyed by people who are so often portrayed as being annulled by pessimism and despair. It must have been the fact that society was still unformed in the nineteenth century—unformed, that is, in comparison with Western society—which put a premium on the individual mood and the once notorious "Russian soul." And if we compare him with the French novelist, there is indeed a disparity between the emotions of the characters and the ideas of the Russian novelist. How easily in the nineteenth century the brilliant Russian intellect seems to wreck rather than contain its subject. Gogol's brain broke; Dostoevsky ascends into mystifications which are sometimes visions, but are often polemical journalism of the woolliest kind; Tolstoy's powerful mind snaps when it considers sex; the exiles can neither stomach Russia nor the "materialism of the West." Yet to-day, when the West is battered, the claim of the Russian mind to a wider, humane vision than we have had has become serious and arresting. It may have been an enormous advantage to Europe that the West came to Russia late.

One turns with most interest to Mr. Lavrin's pages on the writers of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods. Their works have been translated without system, and we have been able to form little idea of the phases through which the Soviet novelists have passed. The Civil War released a wave of often fast-moving reporting of the savage and heroic kind, and these writers—Babel, Pilnyak, Leonov, are familiar to English readers—and the satirists like Zoshchenko and Ilf and Petrov, seem to me the most readable though not the most impressive. We are apt to think that the revolution made a complete break in the chain, but in fact this was not so except for a few years of restricted liberty. Mr. Lavrin makes no attempt to go into the controversies on his subject. The psychological novelists and the critical "fellow travellers" have had a good deal to say despite the fact that Socialist Realism has in late years been, so to speak, the official doctrine. Indeed the latest tendency to historical fiction and a reassessment of the past is an interesting part of that recognition of the continuity of tradition which has gradually grown into literary criticism in Russia. Mr. Lavrin, from a detached position, gives a definition of the dominant school:

> Our bourgeois realism is mainly one which criticises life. As long as it reflects our modern society in its prbcess of disintegration, it is almost bound to be devoid of faith, of any perspective for the future. It is sceptical and pessimistic by its very nature. Losing the last traces of social consciousness, the modern individual, too, is liable to become a self-centred "decadent," either indifferent or even profoundly hostile to the community. He is critical of the present mainly in order to take revenge for his own frustrated will and for his inner devastation. Socialist realism, however, postulates not only an integrated society, but also a creative scope for the individual and collective will, stimulated by a new faith in man and life. It can be as minute in its description and relentless in its criticism as any bourgeois analysis, but the spirit is different. To quote Gorky, "We are interested in accurate description of reality in so far as this is necessary for a deeper and clearer understanding of all that we must abolish and that we must build up."
>
> Socialist realism thus integrates literature and life. Its aim is not only to reflect life, but to shape it, to imbue it with significance, to direct the creative present towards a more creative future. Such art can be profoundly tragic at times, but it cannot be pessimistic. And herein lies all the difference.

One can see, at once, what is left out, but this realism, as Mr. Lavrin says, is in Herzen and Belinsky as well as in certain Soviet writers. It is a part of the Russian tradition. What is wanted now from Mr. Lavrin is a book on those Soviet writers who have been translated into English.

V. S. PRITCHETT

THE CONQUEROR OF MEXICO.

Hernan Cortes: Conqueror of Mexico. By SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 21s.

Since America will pretty obviously emerge as the dominant world power after the war, it is clear that we had better get up our American history. Cortes is not only one of the leading figures of American history, but one of the great figures of world history. What could be more important, more decisive, than the conquest of the Aztec Empire of Mexico, the founding of Spanish power in the New World? Spain and England are the two fountain-heads from which spring the civilisation of America; and there is little enough appreciation in either of the tremendous achievement of the other: a legacy of the long struggle for our respective shares in the New World. Certainly there has been all too little appreciation in this country of the magnificent colonial effort of Spain, especially in her great age, still less of the secular endurance of the Spanish Empire.

Turning his back on the unhappy struggles, the contemptible fooleries and incompetences of contemporary Spanish politics, Professor Madariaga is doing us a service in making the grand figures of Spain's greatest age clear to us; first with his biography of Columbus and now with Cortes. Only a Spaniard could do this for us, and Madariaga is becoming a historian in the process: more remunerative, in the better senses of the word, than politics anyway. His approach to the subject is quite right: he sees Cortes neither as the lucky hearty of Romance, who won an Empire by a fortunate accident, nor as the brutal Conquistador of sentimentalists on the subject of Imperialism. He treats Cortes as a historian should—with profound respect for a great man, the attempt at every point to understand him in the background of his age and so to interpret his impulses and actions, the movements of his mind. What he brings out so well is the intellectual quality of Cortes' leadership. He says of him:

> With all his spontaneous gifts, his humour, his sallies, his resourceful, quick reactions to the challenges of a life full of incident and accident, Cortes is one of the steadiest, most calculating, careful men of action known to history.

Cortes was an educated Renaissance man, of a legalist turn of mind, who had spent his student years at the university of Salamanca. Then the excitement of the time seized his restless spirit: the harbours of Spain filled with men seeking to enlist under the Great Captain, Gonzalo de Cordoba, for the wars in Italy, the expeditions setting out for the just discovered New World. Arrived in Santo Domingo, the young Cortes said to the friendly Governor who welcomed him: "Neither in this Island nor in any other of this New World do I wish or mean to stay for so long." It was rather superb, and very characteristic of him. He was, above all, a political intelligence with a high quality of mind, like the English conquistadors, Hawkins, Drake, Gilbert, Ralegh, as against the characterful, Protestant bores of nineteenth-century legend. These men of the sixteenth century were Machiavellian: they were leaders, able, resourceful, opportunist, imaginative, men of the Renaissance: the men we need so much to-day, and should admire, instead of the cult of the dreary defeated, the *fainéants*, so prominent in the modern novel and so expressive of a decadent middle-class. Cortes' dealings with Montezuma were a masterpiece of diplomacy, as his settlement of Mexico was inspired by a great vision of the partnership, the union of the two races. He had no feeling of racial prejudice, as the English conquerors of native races appear mostly to have had. Perhaps their instinct was a right one; for the great tragedy of Cortes' career viewed historically is as Madariaga says, that his Renaissance view of the union of the races has not come to pass in spite of the centuries: the soul of the Mexican people, though in blood they are mixed, has remained a battleground between Spaniard and Indian still.

As a story, Cortes' exploits are one of the wonderful stories of the world: it has every quality of excitement, adventure, high courage, tragedy, charm. The personality of the hero is so intensely human: sometimes there are touches which remind one of Cromwell at his best, though without the Bible-thumper's sickening hypocrisy. As opposed to that, Cortes was an indefatigable, a delightful amorist, some of whose worst scrapes were due to this penchant. Madariaga is very sensible and sympathetic about all this. Cortes had a strong objection to the sodomy which was a regular institution with the Mexicans. He was a firmly religious man, quite sure of his convictions. The Mexicans, of course, found him incomprehensible. They thought at first that he was a god, the god Quetzalcoatl (of D. H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*) who had returned according to the ancient prophecies and that this was his Second Coming. It was this belief that so paralysed the action of the Emperor Montezuma, who for the rest is an infinitely sympathetic character, as the Spaniards themselves found and so many historians and writers after them. Religion it was that sank Montezuma, as so many political leaders—as it

almost sank Cortes himself, who could not bear the ghastly rites of human sacrifice which was the central feature of the gloomy Mexican religion and one day went up into the temple and smashed the face of their God of War. This was perhaps rather superfluous of him, though an endearing gesture: he might have continued to be regarded, very conveniently for everybody, as a god, but after this the Mexicans knew he couldn't have been one. Cortes was fundamentally an honest man, in spite of all his tricks—and he had a vast repertory of them: up to anything that occurred.

Madariaga brings out all this human side to his hero as much as his astounding achievements: the conquest of a great and highly organised Empire with five hundred Spaniards, a dozen horses and a few guns. It is a great merit of the book that it relies so much upon and frequently quotes Bernal Diaz, who was an eye-witness of practically the whole story. Though I haven't read him, it is clear that he is one of the great chroniclers of history, as good as the best in Hakluyt, and rather more truthful. The parallel between the adventures and deeds of these early sixteenth-century Spaniards and our own Elizabethan voyagers is very close and strikes one again and again. There are one or two slight blemishes in the book. Madariaga has a bee in his bonnet about democracy: it is anachronistic to talk about democracy in the conditions of that age. He accepts impossibly exaggerated native figures, of population, armies, etc.: one has to be careful of sixteenth-century figures. And is it not mere pedantry to refer to a figure so famous as Montezuma, as Moteçuçuma? Also the book is rather too long-winded; but then, the American public, for which it is primarily intended, apparently likes its books long-winded. All the same, it is a very fine piece of work, admirably documented and of sustained interest from beginning to end. If Madariaga would now go on to give us a portrait of the great age of Spain, the age of Philip II—not another biography of Philip, of which we have several—but a portrait of the age in all its aspects, social, literary, religious, artistic, English readers would be under a further obligation.

A. L. ROWSE

A CONVERT

Socialism, National or International. By FRANZ BORKENAU. *Routledge.* 5s.

Dr. Borkenau continues his rapid pilgrimage from the eager Communism of his youth to the comfortable haven of mild social reform. As he passes on his way, he rediscovers a good deal that has been obvious for many years with a curiously acrid contempt for all in the past who have not shared his present insights. A good deal of what he has to say is eminently sensible, and some of it needed to be said with emphasis. But most of it would be better said if Dr. Borkenau could rid himself of that air of patronising and aloof superiority which he mistakes for scientific detachment. Few writers are likely to impress their readers by sneering at their past.

It is obvious that the organisation of society into nation-states with sovereign power must condition Socialist and Trade Union movements to work within the categories thus imposed. Whatever, therefore, be the aspirations professed by Socialists, the day-by-day urgencies of life will compel them to a policy the emphasis of which is primarily national in character. That emerged grimly in the treatment by British and American Labour of the refugees from Nazi persecution; everything could be done for them except the recognition of their right to earn their daily bread. Dr. Borkenau has no difficulty in showing that the classic principles of a liberal economy cut right across vested interests which Labour in a particular country was anxious to preserve. And he is quite right in his emphasis that the establishment of a Socialist economy makes it no easier to solve the conflict of interest between groups with different standards of living.

But nothing in his argument proves that it is impossible; and nowhere does he analyse the implications of the economy of abundance that comes into view with the idea of a planned society freed from the shackles of historic privilege. Dr. Borkenau has now reached a phase in his own intellectual evolution in which he sees only the weaknesses of his past views and none of their merits. It is in fact conceivable that the next generation will see a development of the idea underlying the Lend-Lease principle; that, just as we aid a friendly State to protect itself from aggression, so we shall assist it to modernise its system of production in the knowledge that its level of effective demand is vitally related to our own prosperity. Dr. Borkenau, in short, is so eager to safeguard himself against the facile Utopianism of his unregenerate days that he tends to fall into the opposite extreme of assuming that the worst is highly probable. The result is that his power to see the emerging shape of a new society is conditioned by his determination never to experience again the deceptions of his youth. The iron having entered into his soul, the acids that dissolved it re-emerge at the end of his pen.

Dr. Borkenau is a man of great ability, of very considerable learning and an incisive personality. His experience of radical movements has been wide, and he is obviously deeply interested in their meaning. But at present he is so obsessed with hatred of his own past, and the grim price he has paid for it, that he does himself less than justice in his books by his fear of becoming the victim of a new enthusiasm. This tends to make him not only the enemy of all enthusiasms of a Left complexion, but to accept the worst "realisms" of the "practical men" in the belief that they represent the only available possibilities. His cynicism, I suspect, conceals a sensitive temperament deeply wounded in the hard school of experience. He ought to remember that, in sociology, as elsewhere, facts have a context set by the mood in which they are approached. And in his present reaction from Marxism, he might, above all, care to recollect that the least attractive side of Marx is his persistent denigration of every contemporary who was slow to recognise his claim to primacy.

HAROLD J. LASKI

SOVIET STANDARDS

Soviet Labour and Industry. By L. E. HUBBARD. *Macmillan.* 15s.

The Key to the Russian Door. By EILEEN BIGLAND. *Putnam.* 10s. 6d.

Borderline Russia. By H. FOSTER ANDERSON. *Cresset Press.* 10s. 6d.

Mr. L. E. Hubbard's book is a painstaking disparagement of the Soviet political, economic and social system in favour of Tsarism, presented with an appearance of sober reasoning and statistical argument under precise chapter headings such as, "The Standard of Living," "Women in Industry," and the "Soviet State." He might have added a chapter on Soviet tolerance, for his introduction is signed September, 1941, from Moscow, where Mr. Hubbard, whose family had commercial interests in Tsarist Russia, has served as a member of a British economic mission. Mr. Hubbard is anxious to dissociate himself from anti-Soviet bigots.

"I am not in agreement," he writes, "with those who would make out that the Russian people to-day are definitely worse off materially than at the close of the Tsarist regime . . ."

On the other hand, he will not associate himself with the views of what he calls Soviet propagandists. He will not support "the allegation

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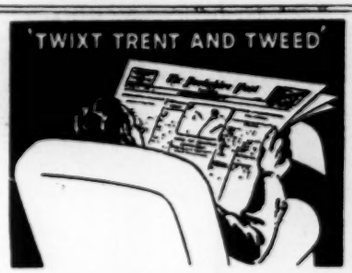

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A German Protectorate

SHIELA GRANT DUFF

The Czechs under Nazi rule. This valuable and informative book describes what has been going on during the last two years in the country which first fell victim to German domination.

12/6

MACMILLAN

of the admirers of the Soviet system that the Revolution has brought about an immense improvement in the lot of the people." For Mr. Hubbard the question whether the Russian worker has benefited from the Russian Revolution is "a subject of keen and often acrimonious controversy. That it is disputable shows that incontrovertible proof, one way or the other, is lacking." With such an open mind on the subject, it is not surprising that among his rare references to the sources of his information, Mr. Hubbard should quote authorities on the Soviet system so widely removed as Trotsky (*The Revolution Betrayed*) and Sir Walter Citrine (*I Search for the Truth in Russia*) or that he should repeat evil rumours like those that "in Soviet Russia they do not take much trouble to cure people injured or diseased in such a way that they will never again be efficient members of the community" and that "the Russians only picked up (in the Finnish War) those wounded . . . who stood a very good chance of complete recovery." Mr. Hubbard on his visits to Russia kept a diary. Like other tourists with diaries he makes important generalisations from trivial instances. So impressed is he by an incident in Kazan when he was accosted by a man who complained about the inadequacy of his rations that he quotes it twice as an anecdote. Of course in Russia, as everywhere else, strangers initiate conversations and discuss their domestic affairs, talk of wages, rations and entertainments in the same way as strangers talk in wartime England. Complaints about rations were as common during the rationing periods in Russia before the war as they are here to-day. Of the Soviet working class, the author of what his publishers call "three distinguished books on Soviet problems" makes this disclosure. "One of the greatest differences from Tsarist times was in the manner and behaviour of the working class. In the streets they walked about as though they owned the place."

Soviet Labour and Industry with its Romanov nostalgia and its frowns on the Soviet past will not contribute to good Anglo-Soviet relations.

The coldness of Mr. Hubbard is more than compensated by the warmth of Mrs. Bigland. She paints her vignettes of Russian life with a house-painter's brush. The jacket of *The Key to the Russian Door* is decorated with a large symbolic key while a Hollywood French Revolutionary mob streaming past a modern Soviet building appears to be storming a Kremlin guarded by Tsarist Cossacks. This matches the simple animation of a book in which the author ranges from Moscow to Samarkand with a conversation to record at every stop. Her picturesque mind makes her experiences read like a novel. She rarely refers to Stalin otherwise than as "yellow-eyed Yosif Stalin." Molotov she calls "Stone-bottom." (According to Mrs. Bigland, Molotov is generally referred to by Russians in this way. I must have met the wrong Russians because I have always heard him called Molotov). Unfortunately, although Mrs. Bigland has dozens of little tales about the people she met on her travels, reported in direct speech—as for example about an old Ossetian who told her that his son whom only the other day he had thrashed for disloyalty had very properly been shot by the police—she refers only obliquely and unsatisfactorily to a meeting with Tukhachevsky less than a year before his execution. In failing to give a direct statement of Tukhachevsky's views, Mrs. Bigland fails to turn a most important key. I can only hope that if the Marshal confided his disloyalty to Mrs. Bigland, she duly reported him.

Borderline Russia is written by a timber merchant who lived in Russia before 1914 and in the last ten years has lived at intervals in Russia and the Baltic States, both as a business man and as a representative of the Polish Relief Fund. While he disclaims all isms he is none the less a representative of the fine humanity of liberalism, expressing himself both in life and speech with sane feeling and balanced judgment among the disorders of the Fascist violence and prejudice in which he so frequently found himself. He was in Lithuania when the Red Army occupied it and his evidence of Soviet military and social discipline has unique value. His observations are based on an ability to distinguish the accidental from the essential. He says of Red Army officers and men "Though they did not handle their knives and forks as we do, they had a well bred air about their table manners . . . discipline was strict . . . and the distinction between officers and other ranks was maintained . . . yet in some way this distinction was not like that in other armies but rather of the kind one sees between the specialist in any branch and the lay public."

Borderline Russia though dealing principally with the fringeing States is one of the few recently published books which have added to our knowledge of Soviet affairs. But it also deserves to be read for its lucid and moving style. This is how the author describes the arrival of Spring in Eastern Europe.

> It is a burst of joy. The re-awakening of life is as sudden as a blow. Everything breaks the chains of winter . . . water starts to trickle, cutting seams in the hard snow and ice. The delicate lace of the birch branches becomes pale crimson. The air is like silk and the forest is scented with pine. And the sun blazes down on the still leafless chestnut trees which in three weeks will be in full bloom. Then comes the return of the storks and the wild geese high in the sky like wisps of smoke.

MAURICE EDELMAN

THEMES FOR BALLET

Supplement to Complete Book of Ballets. By CYRIL W. BEAUMONT. *Beaumont* (75 Charing Cross Road). 18*s*.

This book is a monument of scholarly love, which brings up to 1941 Mr. Beaumont's earlier collections of the theme, music and *decor* of every ballet worthy to be recorded. His criticisms are just and instructive, his knowledge unsurpassed—ballets lately produced in the U.S.S.R. are a very interesting feature. What do we learn from it? That all ballet themes are the same—about love or hate, or both, and the only difference is that they are in three Acts in Russia and one Act here. Yet it becomes clear that a good theme *is* a great help, and if future choreographers, at a loss for a subject, steal from Mr. Beaumont's collections, they will be following a good tradition, and no one will be better pleased than he. I fancy that, of all here represented, Kurt Jooss lends most imagination to the tale. In Russia to-day they go back increasingly to the classics, Gogol and Pushkin, and to folklore. It is very advisable to have no story at all or to choose, as in pantomimes, a story which everyone knows already, which is not true, for example, of *The Prospect Before Us*.

The photographs are very pleasing—how lovely is Lifar, how various Helpmann. As there are now millions of Ballet fans, I do not doubt that millions will be sold of this book by the fannest fan there ever was or will be. LYDIA LOPOKOVA

From Wellington to Wavell. By SIR GEORGE ARTHUR. *Hutchinson*. 12*s*. 6*d*.

This pleasantly written book comprises an anthology of anecdotes, notes on the British Army in two or three of its aspects and sketches of some famous generals. A glance at the chapter headings shows that there is little rhyme or reason in its make-up: for example, Ch. X, 1914 *and* 1939; Ch. XI, *Miscellanea*; Ch. XII, *Some American Generals*. And indeed the author describes it in his foreword as "a roughly constructed volume" intended for the palate of the citizen-soldier of to-day. Lord Milne contributes a

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preface. The Army, he says, has always been treated by politicians as children treat a Meccano toy, delighting "to make it up and rebuild it in a way which appeals to them at the moment."

Amongst all the detailed information, slips are not infrequent. Lord Roberts, when offered command in South Africa in 1899, did not tell Lord Salisbury that "for thirty years he had led an abstemious life in the hope of that day"—but (if the story is not apochryphal) twenty years. The point was, of course, that when on leave from India in 1881 he had been appointed Commander-in-Chief in South Africa in order to redeem Majuba, but on arriving at Capetown found awaiting him orders to return, as Mr. Gladstone had made peace with the Boers. The Duke of Connaught was not appointed Colonel-in-Chief of the Army Service Corps on its institution in 1887, but in 1903 in recognition of its great achievements in South Africa. And it is certainly not "irrefutably true that Haig's vow to find victory in 1918 saved the Allies many hundred thousand casualties and many thousand million pounds."

The chapter on the Commander-in-Chief is specially interesting thanks to the little known facts which it gives about that long defunct office. The book can be recommended for its impressionist picture of the British Army during a century and a half, sketched by the lively pen of an octogenarian who fought at Tel-el-Kebir just sixty years ago.

Week-end Competitions

No. 638

Set by Peter Lambda

Many children and some grown-ups have autograph books in which their friends are invited to inscribe suitable verses or mottoes. Competitors are asked to imagine that they have been requested to write something suitable into the albums of three of the following: The Marx Brothers, Lord Halifax, Vic Oliver, the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, Mae West, Madame Tabouis, Gipsy Petulengro, Pierre Laval, Lord Woolton, Sandy Macpherson, Professor Joad, Father Divine, Noel Coward, Adolf Hitler. Sources of quotations should be given, and entries are limited to 200 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, May 4th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 635

Set by Audrey Hilton

In contrast to other countries, England is conspicuously lacking in Feast Days. Competitors are asked to invent three new annual public holidays, giving a brief description of their origin, the whole entry not to exceed 150 words.

Report by Audrey Hilton

Although I asked for feasting, fast days seem the most popular form of imaginative escape from the war, and if the winning entry had to represent the choice of the greatest number, it would undoubtedly include a day dedicated to St. Woolton. Other popular festivals were St. Guy Fawkes's, St. Willett's, and a "Feast of Lights" (R. S. Jaffray). There were no Thurber-esque fables, and the number of serious entries seems to suggest that England really *is* lacking in Feast Days! If competitors felt like being realistic, it was a pity that their proposals were made with an eye to so limited a future.

There was not much ritual, no processions, and, perhaps significantly, hardly any fireworks. Hilda Finnemore produced some pleasant suggestions for St. Woolton's day "celebrated by feast of carrots. Invocation sung at saint's shrine: "What do I do if . . ." (repeated many times). Response: "Thank you, Mrs. Economy; thank you, Mrs. Pigfood; thank you, Mrs. Henbrain." (Female disciples of saint?) . . ." Her idea of the nymphs rinso, oxydol and persil effervescing at an aquatic "Feast Day of the Points" has a heartening touch of extravagance, too.

There were, in fact, very few plans for self-indulgence, though Helen Brill has my sympathy for her "Housewives Day, on which all Housewives must stay the day in bed" (I would add a fire that flickers). Then there was Maud Gill's "Black Market Monday, an annual day of feasting, particularly on eggs, butter and cream"; but that is a cry which we hope will be answered eventually, without a Feast-Day.

D. W. Barker and Stanley Sharpless make a nice contrast; the former is evidently worried about the birth-rate, for he suggests at least two days of appropriate rejoicing "in the best Frazerian style," while the latter wants a holiday from sex and a festival of quiet, including "suspension of the Forces Programme for 24 hours." There was a large political section, rather cross, which would spend its time "Morrison Dancing along Fleet Street" (J. H. Knight), or doing other people's work on "Bevin Thursday" (J. R. S. John). More cheerfully, Sir Robert Witt invented the "Feast of St. Crippsian."

Having a preference for the fantastic I recommend Polycarp's sly piece of lunacy for first prize (in spite of his fishy pseudonym) and Towanbucket's three likely and lively Feast-Days for the second.

FIRST PRIZE
THREE ENGLISH FEAST DAYS

Brains Trust Day (Feast of St. Joad and All Angels)

The observances include hockey with mixed motives, questions put into one hat and answered out of another, parade of Truth and Beauty (strip-tease, if weather permits), free pony rides, a Bach prelude on the pianola, dance of fauns and centaurettes, hiking in other people's gardens, rolling of lawns and R's, the day ending with lost causes and new futures and bed for all. Origins; bearded.

Highbrow Day.

Tributes working towards a synthesis. Each hour of the day to be dedicated to an author, a musician or a painter. Thus: 7 a.m., Mr. T. S. Eliot and the damp souls of housemaids; breakfast, grilled kidneys in honour of Mr. Bloom; 11 o'clock, a poached egg on a chessboard for Dali, etc. Origins: the highest.

All Bores Day. Origins, Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Listeners.

POLYCARP

SECOND PRIZE
THREE POST-WAR POSSIBILITIES

Labour Day (*May 1st*)

Is said to have originated with a genial suggestion from Stalin that the Peace Conference (then sitting) should "knock off" for May Day. The Conference did, and subsequently inserted a clause in the final Peace Terms (1949) making the holiday compulsory the world over.

Ration Day (*Feb. 8th*)

Was inaugurated in 1945 by Comrade (ex-Duke of) Woolton, to commemorate the final withdrawal of rationing restrictions. The custom has since become popular of exchanging greeting cards, with facetious messages such as: "How are you off for sugar?"

Blackout Day (*Sept. 30th*)

Instituted as a reminder of the Great Blitz, and also to bridge the gap between August Bank Holiday and Christmas. An old children's rhyme runs:

Remember, remember,
Last day of September:
Shrapnel and time-bomb and plane;
And put out the light
In the dead of the night
And dream of the Black-out again.

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